

THE GULF

The man who would replace Saddam

Edward Mortimer looks at prospects for 'the biggest religious man in Iraq'

REPORTS from refugees fleeing Basra that Iraqis are calling for Sayeed Mohammed Bakr al-Hakim to replace President Saddam Hussein constitute the first independent evidence of support inside the country for any of the exiled opposition leaders.

They refer to "the biggest religious man in Iraq". Sayeed Mohammed Bakr al-Hakim is the Islamic Revolutionary Council (Sairi), a body set up in Tehran in 1982, at a time when Iran was driving Iraqi forces out of its territory and hoped soon to be in a position to install an Islamic revolutionary government in Baghdad.

Sayeed Mohammed was born in the holy city of Najaf, close to the Euphrates, in 1939. His father, Ayatollah Mohsen al-Hakim, who died in 1970, was indeed "the biggest religious man" in the eyes of his

Iraqi followers, and indeed was recognised as such by the late Shah of Iran. Sayeed Mohammed himself was trained as a religious scholar (mujtahid), but has not in fact reached any great eminence in that capacity. His followers have lately taken to referring to him as "Ayatollah", but he is not recognised as such by other ayatollahs.

His religious credentials are mainly hereditary - the title "Sayeed" implies descent from the Prophet - and his own activities and writings have been mainly political.

Twice in the 1970s he was arrested and tortured by the Ba'ath regime, on the second occasion being condemned to life imprisonment, but then released (in 1978) under a general pardon, after which he was kept under house arrest.

He was closely associated with Sayeed Mohammed Bakr al-Sadr.

Iraq's most learned native ayatollah, who after the Iranian revolution was identified by Radio Tehran's Arabic service as "the Khomeini of Iraq", and who (perhaps for that reason) was summarily hanged on the orders of President Saddam Hussein in April 1980.

Saddam Hussein arrested 125 members of the Hakim family, executing ten of them

After this Sayeed Mohammed Bakr al-Hakim escaped to Syria, from where he made his way to Iran. In October 1980, soon after the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, he was presented to the press in Tehran as the person capable of "gathering round him all the opposition forces in Iraq".

It took time, however, for him to gather even the Islamic Shia forces, since he lacked the authority of Ayatollah Sadr. It was not until 1982 that Sairi was formed, bringing together various Islamic groups including the Da'wa (Islamic Call) party, the Mujahideen, and the Organisation for Islamic Action. Until 1987 Sayeed Mohammed shared the leadership with another associate of Ayatollah Sadr, better known as a scholar, Sayeed Mahmoud al-Hashimi.

The Hakim family felt the wrath of Saddam Hussein in 1984, when 125 of its members were arrested, ranging in age from nine years old to 75. Ten of them were executed the following year.

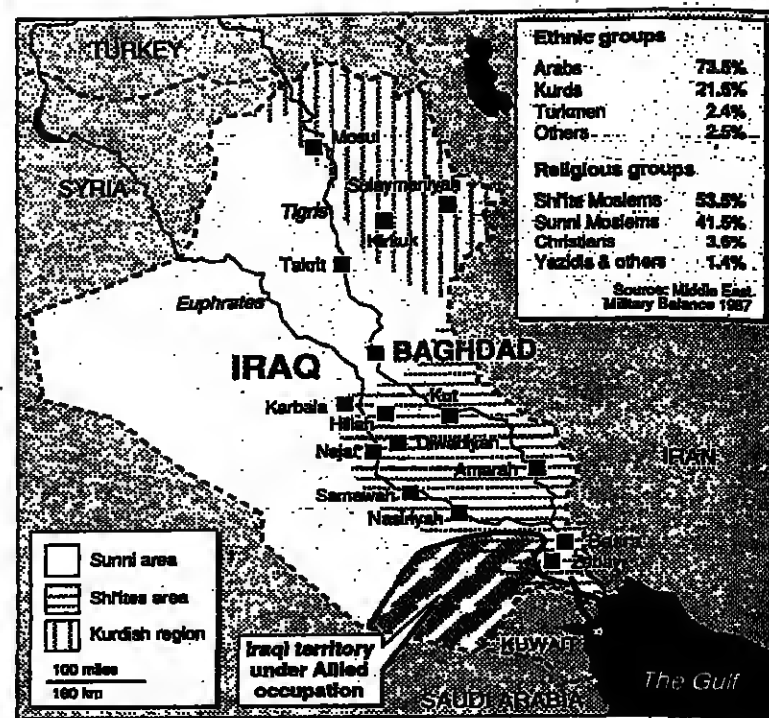
In 1988 Sayeed Mohammed's elder brother Mr Mebdi al-Hakim, a more independent-minded activist who had chosen to base himself in London rather than Tehran, was assassinated by Iraqi agents while attending an Islamic conference in Khartoum.

Over the years, and especially since the end of the Iran-Iraq war, Sayeed Mohammed and his followers have developed closer relations with secular opposition groups, and have accepted the idea that once Saddam Hussein is ousted the future of the country should be decided in free elections.

Sairi was one of 17 organisations to sign a joint statement calling for democracy and human rights in Iraq on December 27, and it is represented on a five-man action committee then formed to lead the united opposition.

After war broke out on January 17 Sayeed Mohammed issued a statement saying that if the allies invaded Iraq he might have to sink his differences with Saddam Hussein and join in the defence of the country. It seems unlikely, however, that he will act on this threat in present circumstances.

IRAQ'S RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC GROUPS



US steers 'twin-track' route in Mideast

By Lionel Barber in Washington

AS Mr James Baker, US secretary of state, prepares to launch the first phase of post-war diplomacy in the Middle East this week, the outlines of a fresh US approach to the region are beginning to emerge.

Mr Baker, whose tour will include stops in Saudi Arabia, Syria, the Soviet Union, Turkey, and a first visit to Israel at the weekend, describes it as a "twin-track" process.

"We have got to find a way for Arab states and Israel to make peace, and we have got to find a way for Israel and Palestinians to begin a dialogue," he said last weekend.

This represents a new order of priorities. In the first 18 months of the Bush administration, Mr Baker emphasised

the primacy of the Palestinian issue, attributing near-magical properties to an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue as a catalyst for regional peace.

The US has now accepted the argument put forward by Mr Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, that a new attempt to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian problem should be linked to progress in relations between Israel and Arab states such as Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan.

More reluctantly, the administration has also accepted Israel's argument that it deserves US compensation for war damage during the Gulf conflict.

Despite hints that Mr Baker wanted to use the Israeli demand as leverage, the

administration has bowed to congressional pressure and indicated it will support at least \$500m (£260m) in cash and military aid - still short of what Jerusalem wants.

The "new thinking" in Washington aims to create a series of mutually reinforcing confidence-building measures between Israel and her neighbours in which both sides might eventually feel able to make concessions.

Several ideas are under study at the US State Department. Saudi Arabia might, for example, take the lead in modifying or ending the Arab boycott of Israeli products; in return, Israel would be expected to ease the clampdown in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The US might also encourage tentative steps by Israel and Syria to mend relations and settle the disputed Golan Heights. At a later stage, Mr Baker might propose formal talks between Israel, Syria and Jordan on scarce water resources. (Informal talks are already underway using Mr Richard Armitage, the seasoned US troubleshooter, as a special envoy.)

These confidence-building steps draw inspiration from an earlier phase in post-war diplomacy: the Helsinki process which helped to reduce east-west tensions and led to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in 1975. The advantage from President George Bush's viewpoint is that this approach defuses

pressure for an early international peace conference, in the run up to the 1992 presidential election.

What is striking is how the US has persuaded the Europeans to tone down their calls for a Middle East peace conference. The implicit trade-off is to allow Europe to share some of the diplomatic burden - a point specifically raised by Mr Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Germany's foreign minister, in his visit to Washington last week.

Mr Genscher has already begun to take a higher profile in the region, reportedly persuading King Hussein of Jordan to consider reviving efforts to put together a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to negotiate with Israel. The EC foreign ministers, meanwhile,

are sending three of their number to the Middle East this week, ahead of Mr Baker.

President Bush appears relaxed about the diplomatic initiatives, but he remains concerned about co-ordination. To this end, he will hold talks with President Francois Mitterrand and France on the island of Martinique on March 14, and with Mr John Major, British prime minister, on Bermuda two days later.

The first large contingent of US troops will return from the Gulf tomorrow and President Bush plans a welcoming ceremony at Andrews Air Force Base. The troops will include members of the 82nd Airborne, the first forces deployed in defence of Saudi Arabia last August.

Kuwait's rulers impose curfew

KUWAIT'S rulers imposed an indefinite night curfew yesterday after a week of occupying Iraqi troops fled in the face of an allied assault. Reuters reports from Moscow.

The official Kuwait News Agency KUNA, received in Cyprus, said the curfew would be in force between 10pm and 4am. KUNA, whose report was uncorroborated, said the curfew was imposed "to complete security, and stability aspects in the country".

The emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, last week imposed martial law for three months and appointed his crown prince and prime minister, Sheikh Saad al-Abdulla al-Sabah, as military governor.

He denied yesterday that Palestinians were being mistreated, saying wrongdoers were being pursued regardless of nationality.

"Some irresponsible elements in Palestinian circles have been repeatedly making false allegations and lies to the effect that the authorities in Kuwait have started acting against the Palestinian community," said foreign minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah.

KUNA said in a commentary that reports of attacks on Palestinians appeared designed to drive a wedge through the country.

There were an estimated 400,000 Palestinians living in

Kuwait on the eve of the Iraqi invasion last August. To most of them, Kuwait was the only home they knew.

Nearly 170,000 are still in Kuwait, according to some Kuwaitis of collaborating with Iraq during its seven-month occupation.

Kuwaiti activists in Cairo will meet in London next week to launch a fresh campaign for the return of a democratically elected parliament.

Religious, secular and business leaders who led thousands of protesters through the streets of Kuwait before Iraq's invasion said on Tuesday they would announce a coalition to press the ruling Sabah family to share its power.

"What we are after is a democratic system, and we want it immediately," said Ali al-Badah, head of an eight-member committee organising the March 14-15 meeting.

A prominent Kuwaiti banker said yesterday Kuwait's ruling family had drawn up a hit list of members of the country's democratic opposition and hired assassins to kill them.

"We have strong evidence that some members of the Sabah family are setting up assassination teams here in Kuwait," said Abdul Aziz Sultan, chairman of the Gulf Bank of Kuwait, the country's second largest, in a US television interview.

Britain and Israel patch up relations

By Robert Mauthner, Diplomatic Correspondent

BRITAIN and Israel yesterday patched up their previously cool relations with an expression of mutual appreciation and sympathy which owed much to Israel's restraint during the Gulf war, when it refrained from retaliating against Iraq's Scud missile attacks.

Talks in London between Mr Douglas Hurd, the British foreign secretary, and his Israeli opposite number Mr David Levy were described as "constructive and useful" and "atmospherically very good" by the Foreign Office.

While it was clear there had been no real breakthrough on how regional security problems and the Palestinian issue, in particular, should be handled in the aftermath of the Gulf conflict, British officials said that Mr Levy's approach

appeared to be more positive than before.

Mr Levy, who had expressed concern before his visit at Mr Hurd's continued emphasis on the need for Israel to withdraw from occupied territories and the right of the Palestinians to their own homeland, was relieved to find that he did not come under much pressure in London.

While Britain, believes an international conference on the Arab-Israeli problem is needed "at an appropriate time," Mr Hurd made it clear that did not mean immediately.

The ministers agreed that, for a conference to succeed, it had to be carefully prepared. Nor was there any point in calling it if it was not clear who would attend or who would represent the Palestinians.



Kuwaiti refugees wait at a checkpoint outside Kuwait City as troops scrutinise their identities yesterday

UK group to tackle emirate's water repairs

By Andrew Taylor, Construction Correspondent

A TEAM of about 20 British and 80 Saudi Arabian engineers will start work next week on the first emergency repairs of Kuwaiti water and sewerage systems to be done by a British company.

Shand Construction of Derbyshire, part of the privately owned Morrison Construction Group based in Edinburgh, has been awarded the water and sewerage contract by the US Corps of Engineers.

The corps has been awarded a \$46m (£23.5m) contract by the Kuwait government to manage emergency repairs and reconnect essential services following the end of the war. It has so far awarded contracts to three US groups, one Saudi Arabian company, one Kuwaiti and one British company.

Mr Fraser Morrison, chairman and chief executive of Morrison Construction, said

yesterday the first six British engineers would be flying to Kuwait this weekend, as soon as they had obtained visas.

"These will immediately start work with US and Kuwaiti engineers assessing the damage and establishing priorities for work to be carried out," said Mr Morrison.

He said the company would be taking some labour and plant from Al Rasheed Shand, a former joint venture partner

in Saudi Arabia. It had also made arrangements to hire plant and equipment and labour from other Saudi Arabian companies.

The contract, believed to be worth about \$3m, will involve construction and repair work as well as damage assessment surveys. "We would expect to start some physical construction work by the end of next week," said Mr Morrison.

representatives of specialist US companies which will try to put out the fires as soon as the fields are cleared of mines and unexploded munitions.

Mr Murad named them as Red Adair, Evergreen Air, Boots & Coots and Drilling Experts OEG.

The damage extends beyond the wells themselves. According to Mr Murad:

- of about 1,000 wells in Kuwait, 800 were damaged, but some did not ignite or subsequently burned out.
- About 500 wells are ablaze. It is estimated that three quarters of the wells can be capped from the surface after the fires are blown out by explosives, and some of the easier ones could be dealt with in a couple of days. But the rest will need to be plugged from the bottom, a costly process which means drilling into

Journalists missing on the road to Basra

By Tony Walker in Riyadh

THERE WAS increasing alarm last night over the whereabouts of about 26 journalists who have disappeared in southern Iraq on the road between the Kuwaiti border and the beleaguered city of Basra.

The reporters set off in convoy on Monday and passed through allied lines towards Iraqi forces grouped south of Basra. No word has been heard of them since.

In Riyadh yesterday an allied spokesman released a list of 11 reporters and photographers who were officially listed as "missing". The list included a two-man Cable News Network television crew, two Reuters photographers, five Italian journalists, a correspondent for the New York Times and an American radio reporter.

France subsequently announced that 15 French reporters and photographers were also unaccounted for after setting off for Basra.

The three days of street battles between rebel forces and Saddam Hussein's army. A spokesman for the allied Joint Information Bureau was highly critical of the reporters, saying "it was a stupid idea to drive up to Basra. There was

no protection... I think they have made a terrible error".

Meanwhile, the release of Iraqi and allied prisoners of war has been delayed for 24 hours because of bad weather.

Iraq yesterday released all 35 of its remaining allied POWs, including 15 Americans and nine Britons. They are expected to leave Iraq today after the delay. A Saudi spokesman said it was hoped that 234 Iraqis could be flown to Baghdad. The allies are holding more than 100,000 Iraqi POWs.

An Iraqi spokesman yesterday made no mention of thousands of Kuwaiti detainees reported to be in Iraq; their release is a condition for the ceasefire and withdrawal of allied forces from Iraqi territory.

Jimmy Burns adds: Thirty-two Iraqis held as prisoners of war at a military camp in Britain since the middle of January are expected to be released today, according to Ministry of Defence officials.

However, there was no official indication last night that a further 33 Iraqis and Palestinians detained in civilian prisons by the Home Office as a "national security risk" would also be released.

Paris softens peace conference stance

By Ian Davidson in Paris

THE French government yesterday appeared to soften its advocacy of an international conference as the essential procedure for seeking a peaceful settlement to the conflict in the Gulf and to the other systems of the Middle East region.

President Francois Mitterrand has long supported the case for a Middle East conference, but yesterday a senior French official stressed that France was not fixated on an international conference as the only feasible mechanism, but was prepared to envisage any procedure which would help the peace process.

The apparent shift in position may be directly connected with the fact that President Mitterrand is due to have a

brief meeting with President George Bush in Martinique on Thursday next week.

Mr Mitterrand revived his proposal for an international conference last September 24 in an address to the UN general assembly, in the hope that the extension of such an offer would help induce Mr Saddam Hussein to evacuate Kuwait.

But yesterday the French official soft-pedalled the idea. "Our proposal has been repudiated by others in a caricatured fashion," he said.

"We are not maniacs or fetishists, but very pragmatic. We are ready for any procedure, any forum, including direct bilateral contacts, provided it works, and provided it addresses the regional problems of the Middle East."

Kuwaiti oil men tot up cost of Iraqi destructiveness

Up to 15 per cent of the emirate's reserves will go up in smoke, reports Victor Mallet from Ahmadi, Kuwait

IT IS difficult to imagine a greater environmental or commercial disaster than the wilful destruction of the Kuwaiti oil industry by Iraq.

Yesterday in the Greater Burgan field, one of the world's largest, burning crude oil and gas were spurting from dozens of sabotaged high pressure wells with a thunderous roar. The same is true of Kuwait's other fields.

Instead of producing about 1.5m barrels a day, the country is watching in horror as an estimated 6m b/d goes up in thick black smoke, damaging oil reservoirs, reducing the amount of sunlight reaching the earth and thereby reducing the temperature in parts of Kuwait by several degrees.

At one of the Burgan wells which

failed to explode, a red bag of explosives attached to a wire and wedged against the wellhead by sandbags could still be seen yesterday.

Crude oil from damaged wells which are not burning flows over the road and the desert in a treacherous sludge, but Kuwaiti officials are more concerned about toxic hydrogen sulphide which may be blown into populated areas from oil wells in western Kuwait.

Of all President Saddam Hussein's acts since the invasion of Kuwait, the destruction of the oilfields was surely the most incomprehensible and spiteful, since it could serve the interests of his regime neither in victory nor defeat.

"I can only describe this one way - horrible," said oil fire fighter Mr Joe Bowden, of Wild Well Control.

"It's a criminal injustice to the whole world. It will take time but we will be able to do it."

Officials of the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), the exploration and production arm of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, said yesterday that it could take one or two years to bring the situation under control and five years for Kuwait to regain its previous level of oil exports.

In the meantime they hope to begin producing about 50,000 b/d for local power stations and for domestic gasoline consumption.

The only construction work carried out by Iraq during its seven-month occupation of the Kuwaiti oil fields was for the war effort. Mr Ahmad Murad, one of KOC's managers at the company's headquarters in Ahmadi, said the Iraqis built 400km

of pipelines. Some of them were to fill the burning oil trenches which formed part of their front-line defences.

The Iraqis also built two 45-km long, 16-inch pipelines from the Rawdatain field in the north to the island of Bubiya, apparently because they planned to flood the sea with crude oil as they did from the offshore loading point at Ahmadi.

Mr Murad said the destruction wrought by Iraq could reduce Kuwaiti oil reserves by 10 to 15 per cent, while reduced pressure in the fields and water contamination caused by the over-rapid flow might require the use of secondary recovery techniques and raise the cost of production fourfold.

On Monday, KOC officials met rep-

resentatives of specialist US companies which will try to put out the fires as soon as the fields are cleared of mines and unexploded munitions.

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- About 500 wells are ablaze. It is estimated that three quarters of the wells can be capped from the surface after the fires are blown out by explosives, and some of the easier ones could be dealt with in a couple of days. But the rest will need to be plugged from the bottom, a costly process which means drilling into

the old well so that mud or concrete can be pumped in.

- most of Kuwait's 26 gathering centres and gas oil separation plants, each of which collect about 100,000 b/d from 30 to 40 wells, are damaged.
- some storage facilities have been destroyed, including the 13m barrel facility at Ahmadi, but that is not an immediate priority since there is no oil to store.
- much of the oil industry's ancillary equipment has been destroyed by the Iraqis or the allies or stolen by Iraq. \$20m of equipment has been lost by the KOC in Ahmadi alone.
- The company's headquarters office, one of the oldest buildings in the country, was burnt down.
- Kuwaiti refineries have not been extensively damaged.

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Agencies warn of Africa's critical food shortages

By Michael Holman, Africa Editor, in London

AID AGENCIES warned yesterday of a disaster of monumental proportions in the making in Sudan where nearly 8m people need emergency food aid because of shortages created by war and drought. A further 5m people in Ethiopia, their numbers swollen by refugees from Somalia, are also at risk.

At a press conference in London, officials from Oxfam, the British agency, and the World Food Programme, said that food shortages so far meet only one third of the amount needed.

In a new Ethiopia appeal, the World Food Programme warned that the shortfall in food pledges and cash needed for transport and handling had led to a dramatic situation which needs to be addressed immediately and prior to the onset of the lean season between May and October, especially in Eritrea where there is no short season crop to tide the population over.

The crisis in Ethiopia has been exacerbated by the recent conflict in Somalia. Mr John McGrahan, an Oxfam official who has recently returned from the region, told the conference that up to 200,000 refugees from Somalia have arrived to join the 370,000 existing refugees in the country.

The situation is even more critical in Sudan, say relief officials. "Speedy action by all donors and relief agencies is needed to prevent a major catastrophe," Oxfam said yesterday, adding that there were fears that "for many people it is already too late".

Other countries in Africa are badly affected by food shortages, say aid agencies.

Over a million Liberians need food, while in Angola a United Nations special relief programme for nearly 2m people has had to be suspended because of the civil war. Malawi needs help in caring for over 800,000 refugees from Mozambique.

In Mozambique itself the situation could become "critical" after July. Nearly 2m war displaced Mozambicans need feeding, and renewed road attacks by rebels have stopped some grain convoys.

In a separate warning the Save the Children aid agency said that up to 10m children "are caught in the pincer of war and famine in Africa".

Central bank's survey shows little evidence of serious slowdown

Japan's business confidence hit by crisis in Gulf

By Stefan Wagstyl in Tokyo

JAPANESE business confidence has declined because of the Gulf crisis and high interest rates, according to a quarterly economic survey published yesterday by the Bank of Japan. But the survey indicates there is little evidence of a serious slowdown across the economy.

Economists said confidence was higher than expected, given that the central bank's survey was conducted between January 18 and February 15 - the height of the Gulf crisis. Business activity was still relatively high, they added.

"The overall result is positive, bearing in mind the time the survey was done. It means it is unlikely the BoJ will be cutting interest rates soon," said Mr Keikichi Honda, head of research at the Bank of Tokyo.

Prices in the stock and bond markets were hit as hopes of an early cut in interest rates receded. The Nikkei index of leading shares closed down 52.54 points at 25,913.48.

Central bank officials are likely to maintain their current tight grip on the money supply, Mr Yasushi Mieno, the

governor of the Bank of Japan (BoJ), told a parliamentary committee that prices needed further close monitoring amid continued tightness in the markets for manufactured goods and for labour.

According to the bank's survey, the index of large manufacturing companies expecting business to be good in coming months dropped three points, from 43 in the last survey. For non-manufacturing companies the index fell from 47 to 44.

The falls were particularly severe among property companies, which cited high borrow-

ing costs as a problem. Small service companies were hit by a combination of high interest rates and difficulties in hiring labour.

Generally, companies reported a deterioration in their cash positions. For the first time since August 1981 a majority of companies said they expected their liquidity positions to worsen.

Manufacturing companies expect a decline in capital investment of 1.1 per cent in the financial year starting in April - the first reduction in four years. Non-manufacturing

companies expect a modest rise of 1.1 per cent. Central bank officials pointed out that last year's level was very high.

Labour shortages remain acute, the survey says, putting pressure on prices generally. This was taken by economists as a sign that the Bank of Japan would pay close attention to this year's wage negotiations, which reach a climax later this month.

Trade union leaders are seeking increases of 8 to 9 per cent. Employers want to see a figure close to last year's average of 5.94 per cent.

For this reason, business leaders have been unusually supportive of the central bank's tight credit policy. Leaders of Keidanren, the main employers' federation, have endorsed Mr Mieno's policy, even though some of their members are complaining about an economic slowdown.

So far, the clearest sign that the slump which hit the financial and property markets last year is spreading to the real economy is in the car industry, where manufacturers are cutting production plans to cope with a decline in demand.

Fed takes action on BCCI

By Alan Friedman in New York

THE Bank of Credit and Commerce International, the Luxembourg-based bank which last year saw two subsidiaries admit to having laundered millions of dollars on behalf of Panama's former ruler General Manuel Noriega, has been instructed by the US Federal Reserve to sell its sharesholding in a company which controls Washington's biggest bank.

The Federal Reserve order, signed by both US regulators and Mr Zafar Iqbal, chief executive of BCCI, also requires BCCI to cease all banking operations in the US.

Mr Robert Morgenthau, Manhattan's district attorney, said his office had been investigating alleged money laundering by BCCI's New York office and the veracity of various filings of CCAB statements to US authorities.

The district attorney said the Fed order meant that BCCI would now be "out of the country". BCCI could not be reached for comment yesterday and has declined in the past to say whether it controls First American.

New orders in US decline again

By Peter Riddell, US Editor, in Washington

NEW ORDERS for US manufactured goods dropped a further 1.7 per cent in January, the third decline in a row, pointing to a further weakening in output in the immediate future. Orders for both durables and non-durables fell: the 1.8 per cent decline in the former was twice as large as initially estimated.

However, there have been some signs that the worst is over. The monthly purchasing managers' index picked up in February for the first time

since last May, with a slight rise in the new orders component. The Commerce Department said the decline in new orders for durables resulted mainly from lower demand for electrical machinery and transportation equipment, with orders for aircraft especially volatile.

The fall in non-durable orders reflected lower demand for food and petroleum products. Unfilled orders slipped back 0.2 per cent in January, for the second time in three

months, while manufacturers' inventory was unchanged in the month. The administration is confident the economy will start picking up, especially with the boost to consumer and business confidence provided by the end of the Gulf war.

Mr John Robson, the Treasury deputy secretary, told a Congressional committee yesterday that the administration believed "there may be latitude for further movement [in easing]".

Argentina threatens rail sell-off

By John Barham in Buenos Aires

ARGENTINA has threatened to privatise all rail services to force an end to a three-week-long wildcat strike that has developed into the most serious challenge to President Carlos Menem's effort to tame trade unions.

Mr Domingo Cavallo, the economy minister, said that the railways would be closed until they were privatised, unless the strike ended immediately.

Mr Orlando Norberto, a strike leader, said: "This is lunacy. I'm not sure if they are serious or if it's an attempt to break the strike."

Mr Eduardo Nava, the rail network's administrator, said yesterday that everyone wanted a swift return to normal running of the strike-hit services.

President Menem compromised yesterday by offering a 25 per cent pay increase and a \$53 advance; strikers are demanding a 200 per cent increase.

Mr Cavallo said the rail system, Ferrocarriles Argentinos, which transports 1.2m passengers daily, lost \$480m annually. He said its closure would save the Treasury \$10m a month in operating subsidies.

The government has laid on an emergency bus service to compensate for lost rail services.

Argentina has already sold a railway line to a group of local and foreign investors. The sale took 18 months to negotiate.

Pretoria investigates life office

By Philip Gawth in Johannesburg

THE South African government has launched an investigation into alleged trading irregularities at Old Mutual, the country's largest life office.

The follows an internal investigation which revealed that crimes may have been committed. Two members of staff were suspended on February 14 in connection with the investigation.

Mr Robie Coetzee, the minister of justice, and Mr Bernard du Plessis, the minister of finance, jointly announced a senior team to investigate the affair. It includes Attorney-General Mr Frank Kahn SC, the Registrar of Financial Institutions, senior Department of Finance officials, the S.A. Police, members of the Reserve Bank (central bank) and the private sector.

Mr Gerhard van Niekerk, Old Mutual's chief operating officer, said "a few investment transactions recently came to light which individually appeared completely normal but collectively showed a suspicious trend".

He said the matter had been handed over to the authorities as soon as it appeared a criminal investigation might be warranted. Mr van Niekerk said there was no indication that individual policyholders or unit trust investors had been, or were likely to be, prejudiced. Pension funds that might be affected had been notified.

Reform rift likely to tarnish Peru's image

By Sally Bowen in Lima

PRESIDENT Alberto Fujimori of Peru has suffered a political setback, following a public rupture between his government and a key presidential adviser.

The split is likely to damage the international financial community's image of Peru, which had been improving steadily since Mr Fujimori took office in July 1990.

The rift was over promulgation of a decree on the "democratisation" of government decision-making. Mr Hernando de Soto considered the reform as the cornerstone of all other structural changes on the agenda of his Institute for Freedom and Democracy (ILD), an informal think-tank for the Fujimori administration.

The decree provides for prior publication and popular consultation on a wide range of the 26,000 legal acts promulgated each year in Peru. President Fujimori had announced the reform with apparent enthusiasm last week.

But his cabinet cut it mercilessly. It was finally published in an form unacceptable to the ILD, which accused ministers of "opting for authoritarianism".

Mr de Soto had been Peru's chief negotiator with the US on a new bilateral drug-trafficking policy. The agreement - which has saved Peru from possible disqualification from US aid - is almost ready for signature. He had also played a key role in establishing contacts to normalise Peru's international financial relations.

Mr de Soto explained that all other ILD-proposed reforms - which include crop substitution projects for coca-growing farmers, reform of the judicial



Alberto Fujimori: facing a political setback

system, and administrative simplification - depended directly on the Fujimori government's commitment to the democratisation of decision-making.

"Without this reform, all the major structural changes needed in Peru cannot come about," he said. "Everything else is negotiable, but not this."

Mr de Soto said that, despite his close involvement in the still inconclusive procedures for re-establishing Peru's international financial relations, his departure should not affect the process. Diplomatic sources interpreted the estrangement between the government and the ILD as serious, especially for Peruvian-US ties.

Opposition to Mr de Soto has recently increased; the media has increasingly referred to him as "the informal President" or even "the Rasputin of Lima".

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Japan warns car makers to limit exports to EC

By Robert Thomson in Tokyo

JAPAN'S Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) has made clear to the country's car makers that it would disapprove of attempts to compensate for slower US sales with a surge in exports to the EC.

The ministry fears that a sudden increase in shipments to the Community could compromise the sensitive negotiations on access for Japanese cars to the single European market, and has noted that exports of passenger cars to the EC rose by 12.9 per cent in January against the same month last year.

At the same time, Japanese makers have announced cuts in production for the US market and have released modest targets for the domestic market, which has flattened after several years of growth.

The Japanese government has been waiting for the EC to agree on a common policy for car imports, and to settle issues such as the status of components and subsidies, which have divided EC partners. When the EC reaches agreement, it is expected that

negotiations will be held with Japanese representatives to get approval for "voluntary" restraints.

A MITI official said that a monitoring system on exports to the EC had been in place since 1986, and makers had been advised to take care not to disrupt the market.

A spokesman for Nissan, the Japanese maker, said the company had been advised to be "prudent" and had abided by that guidance.

The ministry emphasised yesterday that no specific target had been set for Japanese exports. However, makers had been told to ensure export levels "will not create confusion in the European market".

Yesterday, Mr Lindsey Halsey, chairman of Ford of Europe, warned that the European Community should be cautious in removing restrictions on Japanese car sales in Europe. Japanese car imports and local Japanese car production in Europe remain the most sensitive outstanding problem to be resolved in the creation of the single European market from the end of 1992.

Eximbank tests the Soviet market

THE US Export-Import Bank is making a cautious entry into the Soviet market for the first time since President Bush in December gave a six-month waiver to legislation blocking trade ties between the two superpowers, writes Nancy Dunne in Washington.

The US trade finance agency has quietly given initial approval to two requests for backing from US exporters. The details are being closely held, as is customary with preliminary commitments. Eximbank will say only that one project involves financing for a glass processing plant; the other, a short-term insurance policy for the sale of super phosphoric acid.

With preliminary commitments in hand, US exporters have an assurance of loans, guarantees or insurance, providing they can make the sales. Deals may then be concluded rapidly, or may still take months or even years.

Eximbank has been barred from providing financing to the Soviet Union by the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which links Soviet emigration policy and the granting of preferential treatment under Most Favoured Nation status.

Even now, under another provision, its financing is limited to \$300m. Mrs Jenni Falekiewicz, Eximbank spokeswoman, said the agency has received financing requests totalling more than \$800m.

"This is the beginning of a good faith effort to build a bridge of trade and economic transactions with the Soviets," she said. But the agency is following events in the republics closely and scrutinising every transaction on a case by case basis.

Greece invites tenders for dam

THE GREEK government is inviting international bids for a \$440m (\$250m) dam project in central Greece to boost water supplies for Athens, writes Kevin Hope.

The project calls for construction of an 80-metre high earth dam across the Evros river and a 30-kilometre tunnel to feed the depleted Morinos reservoir serving the capital. Funding will come from the state investment budget, according to the public works ministry. Selected bidders will be asked to submit tenders this summer. Construction should start within 1991 and be completed in 1994.

The government is giving the project top priority since Athens faces an severe water shortage. For the second successive year the Morinos reservoir, 150 kilometres from the capital, contains barely enough water to last through the summer, despite efforts to reduce consumption, according to the city water authority.

Ford signs engine deal with Yamaha

By Kevin Done, Motor Industry Correspondent, in Geneva

FORD has signed a contract with Yamaha of Japan for the design and development of a small engine to be used in its European car range from the mid-1990s.

Yamaha had been commissioned earlier to carry out an advanced development study for a new small engine range for Ford of Europe, but it has now been awarded a full contract to develop the engine up to the prototype stage.

Ford said that Yamaha would be responsible for around one third of the total development work on the engine. This is the first time that Ford of Europe has contracted out such an important

element of its mainstream engine development programme to an outside engineering company and the first time that it has turned to Japan.

Separately it already employs Cosworth, a subsidiary of Vickers in the UK, to develop high performance engines, and it has also used Porsche for contract engineering work.

Once Yamaha has produced the first prototypes, Ford itself will take over the testing, evaluation and production engineering. The engine programme, code-named Sigma, is currently planned to be a family of 1.0, 1.25 and 1.4 litre

It is the first time Ford has contracted out such an important element of its mainstream engineering development programme, and the first time it has turned to Japan

engines and will replace the company's existing 1.1-1.3 litre small engines produced at its plant in Valencia, Spain. Valencia is also the favoured location for the first production

phase of the Sigma project with a planned capacity for 500,000 engines a year with output expected to begin in 1995.

A project on this scale could cost more than \$1bn, although Ford is believed to be seeking to cut the costs through the use of simultaneous engineering methods. It is planning a second phase of investment for the Sigma engine range with an additional capacity for 300,000 engines a year. If this goes ahead Valencia or the South Wales engine plant are the most likely locations.

Ford's engine programme is being drastically updated in the next five years, however, and it is also working to

develop the Orbital two-stroke engine as an alternative unit to power small cars, including a possible mini car smaller than its existing Fiesta supermini.

Introduction of the two-stroke engine could overtake the second phase of the Sigma project. Ford said yesterday that the scale of its existing commitments to develop new engines had made it impossible to develop the entire Sigma engine project with its own engineering resources in Europe.

Ford in the US has previously used Yamaha to develop and produce a high performance engine for its US Taurus saloon car range.

GM predicts sharp decline in car sales to western Europe

By Kevin Done in Geneva

GENERAL MOTORS OF THE US, one of the big six volume car makers in Europe, has revised downwards its forecast for western European new car sales by around 350,000 units or nearly three per cent following the Gulf war.

Before the war started GM was expecting new car sales in western Europe (including eastern Germany) to total around 13.25m this year, a 1.3 per cent fall from the 13.42m achieved last year.

Mr Robert Eaton, president of GM Europe, said the company had recently cut its forecast to 12.9m, however, representing a decline of some 500,000 units or almost 4 per cent from 1990.

"Some markets such as Spain, Sweden or the UK are weak, with the UK and Sweden clearly in recession," he said. Only Germany would show any significant growth this

year. Mr Eaton said that GM expected new car demand in western Europe during the 1990s to grow by an average of 1.5 per cent a year, however, reaching about 14.5m units by the end of the decade compared with 13.4m units last year.

He forecast an annual average growth rate for light commercial vehicles of 2 per cent a year with western European sales rising from about 1.9m units in 1990 to 2.1m in 1995 and 2.3m in the year 2000.

By the mid-1990s Europe would be the largest single total new vehicle market in the world at 17.7m units and by the end of the decade GM forecast that the combined east and west European vehicle market should reach 19.5m units.

Unlike several of its rivals GM is not currently planning any production cut-backs in

Europe to cope with falling demand in the total market.

Mr Eaton said the company was confident its plants would "continue operating at high capacity levels throughout the year".

He said that GM was planning to press ahead with its plan to increase its capacity in Europe by 25 per cent in the medium term.

Mr Eaton forecast that Japanese car makers would increase their share of the western European market from 11.6 per cent last year to 15 per cent by the mid-1990s and 20 per cent or more by 2000.

Currently they already held a share of more than 30 per cent in the unrestricted markets in western Europe, while their share in the five restricted markets of France, Italy, Spain the UK and Portugal was 5.1 per cent.

VW wins approval for BAZ venture

VOLKSWAGEN, Germany's car manufacturer, yesterday won approval by the regional Slovak government as partner for a Slovak car-parts manufacturing factory, the state news agency CTK reported.

A contract between Volkswagen and the Bratislava-based BAZ factory will be signed by the end of this month, CTK said.

The report did not say what Volkswagen's share in the anticipated joint-venture would be, nor did it specify how much the German partner would be ready to invest in the ailing Slovak enterprise.

"We agreed to sign an agreement with the German firm by the end of March," Slovak Premier, Mr Vladimir Stedra said, adding that production in the BAZ factory should start in December this year.

Volkswagen plans to manufacture 350,000 transmissions per year in the initial stages of BAZ, expanding into the production of up to 200,000 Volkswagen passenger cars in the second phase and employing six thousand people, media reports said last month.

Last December, Volkswagen defeated a joint bid by France's Renault and Volvo of Sweden to buy into Czechoslovakia's Skoda automobile works, the largest car-maker in eastern Europe.

VW is expected to invest a total of DM9bn (\$6bn) over the next four years to modernize Skoda. According to earlier reports, BAZ was preparing to sign an agreement with US General Motors to produce transmissions and assemble GM's Opel Vectra and Kadett models for sale in Czechoslovakia.

But Volkswagen and Renault joined the bidding for participation in the BAZ factory, with Volkswagen being favorite. Earlier reports also indicated VW would assume BAZ's debts of 1.5bn crowns (\$56m).

N American clash over newsprint price rises

By Bernard Simon in Toronto

AN INTENSE tussle is taking place between North American newsprint producers and their customers over a price increase which was due to take effect at the beginning of the year.

Publishers' efforts to roll back the 5.5 per cent price rise have burst into the open with a decision by four US newspaper groups which control the Ponderay mill in Washington state to take legal action against their operating partner, Canadian Pacific Forest Products, which refuses to rescind the increase.

An official at Knight-Ridder, the Miami-based newspaper group which is one of the Ponderay shareholders, said yesterday that "our business is lousy. We think the price increase is the wrong thing at this time". CP Forest has a 40 per cent equity stake in the project.

The pricing battle is being nervously watched by banks which have provided sizeable project loans for several of the mills which have come on stream in the past few years and which are now contributing to a glut of newsprint. The Ponderay mill, for example, was financed with \$242m of debt and \$10m of equity.

Mr Amit Wadhwaney, analyst at MJ Whittman & Co in New York, predicts that the banks may become more actively involved, either to

support higher prices or to recapitalise ailing mills.

So far only three relatively small US producers, two of them owned by publishing companies, have publicly announced a rollback in prices. However, discounts are widespread, and in some cases are said to have widened since the official price increase took effect.

Hard-pressed Canadian producers, which need the price increase to offset the strong Canadian dollar and rising environmental and labour costs, are resisting pressure from their customers especially strongly. An official at Donohue, a Montreal-based producer which has a joint venture with the New York Times, said that "we're invoicing at the new prices".

The Canadian producers, which account for about 85 per cent of North American sales, are instead hoping to bring supply into line with demand by temporarily shutting down some machines.

Abitibi-Price, the biggest Canadian producer, announced in January that it would cut first-quarter output by 40,000 tonnes. Since then, it has decided to prolong a shutdown at its big Iroquois mill to be followed by a shortened work week.

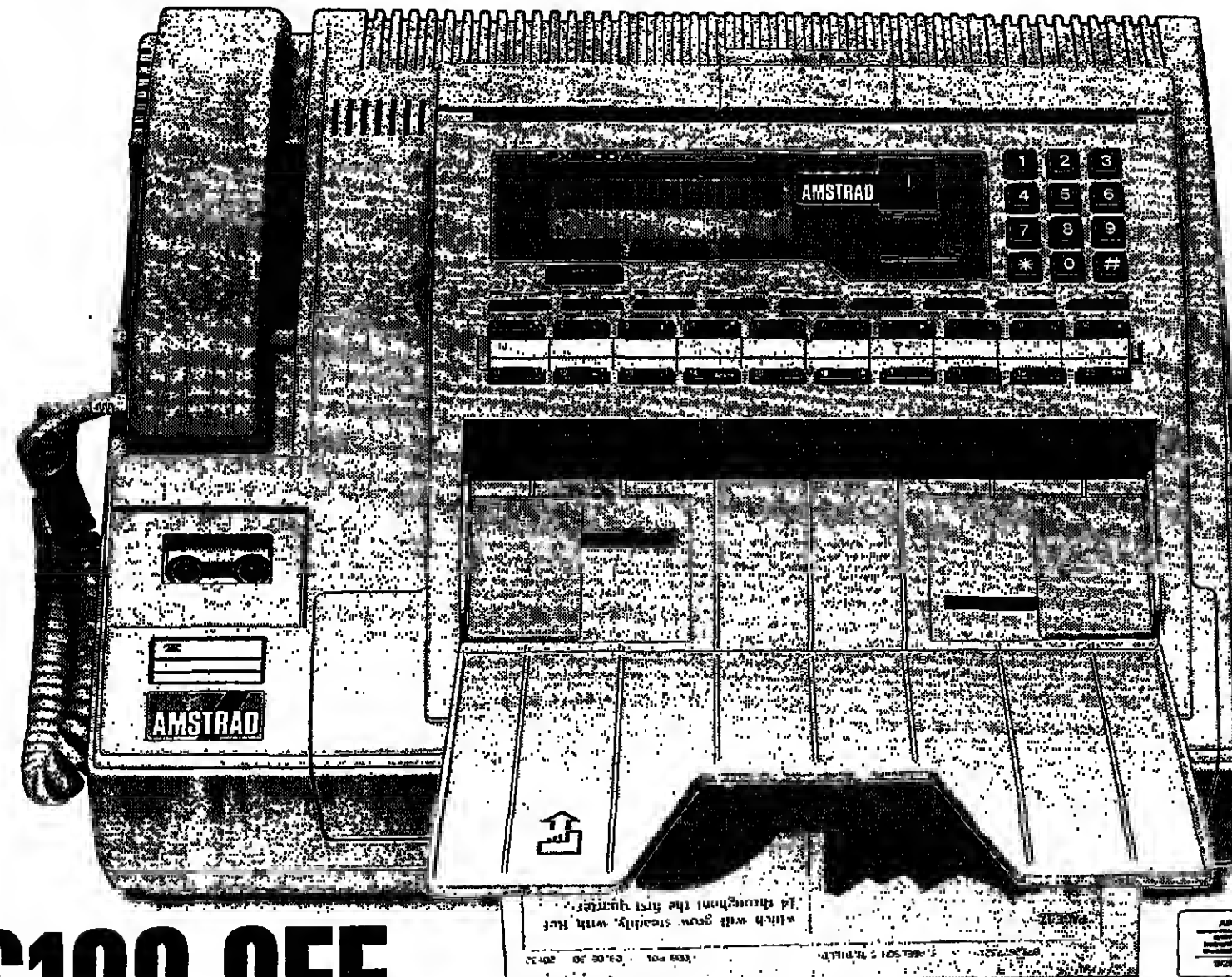
Four other Canadian producers have announced shutdowns in the past week.

Greece invites tenders for dam

THE GREEK government is inviting international bids for a \$440m (\$250m) dam project in central Greece to boost water supplies for Athens, writes Kevin Hope.

The project calls for construction of an 80-metre high earth dam across the Evros river and a 30-kilometre tunnel to feed the depleted Morinos reservoir serving the capital. Funding will come from the state investment budget, according to the public works ministry. Selected bidders will be asked to submit tenders this summer. Construction should start within 1991 and be completed in 1994.

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UK NEWS

Power generators share offer sparks big private demand

By Clare Pearson

THE OFFER of shares in the two privatised electricity generators looks assured of success when it closes this morning after sparking powerful demand from private investors.

The public is almost certain to have asked for enough shares to trigger clawback arrangements, where stock is taken away from overseas and institutional buyers and reallocated to private investors.

By lunchtime yesterday, more than 600,000 applications for shares in National Power and PowerGen had been counted. A further flurry of forms was anticipated ahead of this morning's 10am deadline.

However, very heavy over-

subscription would cause embarrassment to Mr John Wakeham, energy secretary. When pricing the shares at the end of last month, he was striving to avoid the accusations of underpricing that followed last November's sale of the regional electricity companies.

Initially, the government set aside for the public about £600m worth of the £2.15bn sale - which comprises 60 per cent of the shares in the two generators. But the public will buy slightly more than £1bn worth, or 49 per cent of the offer, assuming a clawback.

If that happens, institutions at home and overseas which have underwritten the offer

will also be asked to take part in a tender. A portion of the shares set aside for them, amounting to 16 per cent of the total offer, will be resold to the highest bidders at levels above the fixed 175p offer price.

It looked as if the public was already 70 per cent of the way to triggering clawback, set to occur when the £600m offer is 2.5 times over-subscribed.

The stockmarket has risen substantially since the share price was announced. Dealings start on Tuesday. I G Index, financial bookmakers operating a form of advanced market, were quoting 126p for PowerGen shares and 120p for National Power.

N Ireland jobless 'will increase by 3,000'

By Our Belfast Correspondent

UNEMPLOYMENT in Northern Ireland will rise by 3,000 by mid-June, though the province may be the UK's best performing region this year according to a economic forecast published yesterday.

The projections, by Dr Stephen Roper and Dr Graham Gudgin, of the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre, suggest that the province will be cushioned from the

worst of the national recession in 1991 because it has a large public sector and because mortgages are smaller than in the rest of the UK.

According to the centre, an independent research body whose forecasts are linked to the Cambridge Econometrics model of the UK economy, these factors will allow some new jobs to be created in the province's service sector this

year, unlike the rest of the UK where such service sector employment is expected to fall.

Manufacturing employment in Northern Ireland is projected to contract by around 3,000 during 1991 as the effect of falling UK demand spreads in the province. The forecast suggests that unemployment in June will rise to 103,000 (14.7 per cent) and by another 4,000 by the middle of next year.

Nissan UK associate may sell rival cars

By John Griffiths

AFG, the network of nearly 180 car dealers controlled by Nissan UK chairman Mr Octav Botnar, is expected to start taking on manufacturer franchises other than Nissan within the next few days.

A deal under which several of the AFG outlets will switch to selling French cars, is understood to be imminent.

Deals with Fiat of Italy and German and Scandinavian manufacturers are also understood to be under discussion.

The move by AFG Holdings, which is an associate company of Nissan UK, reflects a desire both to make better use of some of its under-utilised dealerships and to start spreading a "safety net" under AFG should its supplies of Nissan cars be cut off at the end of this year.

After a series of disputes - most recently, over the prices the Japanese car maker has been charging Mr Botnar's company for its new cars - Nissan has declared that it will sever all ties with Nissan UK on December 31 this year, and set up its own UK distribution and sales organisation.

Nissan UK is fighting the termination in the courts, arguing that it is invalid.

Should the British company lose, however, AFG Holdings could be plunged into crisis by



Octav Botnar, sounding out other manufacturers

having nothing to sell.

The allocation this year of possibly 20 or more of the AFG network to selling makes other than Nissan, is understood to be the real explanation behind motor trade rumours that Fiat, struggling to improve a market share of around 2 per cent in the UK, might be preparing to pass on to Mr Botnar the distribution of Fiat and Lancia cars.

AFG, of which Mr Botnar is chairman, is a highly profitable operation, reporting pre-tax profits of £74.5m in the financial year ending July 31 1990, up 17 per cent on the previous year's £63.59m.

Recession squeezes liquidity

By Rachel Johnson, Economics Staff

THE liquidity of Britain's large industrial and commercial companies - particularly in manufacturing - is being squeezed down by the recession, figures showed yesterday.

The Central Statistical Office reported that the seasonally-adjusted liquidity ratio of large UK companies in the fourth quarter of last year fell to 60 per cent. This compared with 61 per cent in the previous quarter.

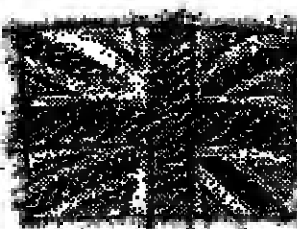
Based on a survey of about 300 businesses comprising just under half the total of large industrial and commercial companies in Britain, the figures give an indication of how the corporate sector is reacting to high interest rates.

The latest ratio, which measures total financial assets that are realisable in less than one year as a percentage of financial liabilities that may have to be repaid in one year, was well below the recent high of 116 per cent at the end of 1987.

In manufacturing, liquidity is dropping even faster under the pressure of high interest rates and the business downturn.

The liquidity ratio was 56 per cent, after 33 per cent a quarter earlier and 50 per cent at the end of 1989.

BRITAIN IN BRIEF



British Gas signs three large orders

British Gas signed multi-million pound contracts to supply gas to three power station projects last week, shortly before it choked off demand from the electricity industry by sharply increasing prices.

The three deals were signed with National Power, Yorkshire Electricity and British Nuclear Fuels in a hectic scramble, after British Gas had contacted companies involved in several power station projects to tell them informally of its plans to raise prices.

British Gas increased prices for gas supplied to new power station projects by 85 per cent from last Saturday. The rise was prompted by the company's fears that spiralling demand for gas from the electricity industry could threaten supplies to its traditional customers.

The Kia "Pride" range of small hatchbacks - versions of which are sold under the Ford badge in North America - will compete with vehicles ranging from Fiat's Panda to Rover Group's Metro.

They will be sold initially through a network of 100 dealers, says MCL, which is also the importer and distributor of Mazda and Polish-built FSO vehicles in the UK. Eventually, around 150 dealers are expected to be appointed.

Kia will be the second Korean manufacturer to establish a presence in the UK, following Hyundai, which has been present for nearly a decade. Last year, Hyundai's UK sales reached just over 7,000.

Strike threatens nuclear ships

Ships carrying nuclear waste between Japan, Italy and the UK could be prevented from sailing if strike action by merchant navy officers goes ahead, the officers' union Nmmat has warned.

Six ships owned by Pacific Nuclear Transport, in which British Nuclear Fuels has a majority shareholding, could be affected by possible action over a pay claim. About 100 Nmmat members on the ships are being balloted on the action.

Labour pledge on TV licences

Hotels and other commercial ventures might have to pay more for their television licences under a future Labour



Roy Hattersley: wants cheaper TV for pensioners

government to help fund cheaper licence fees for pensioners.

Mr Roy Hattersley, deputy leader of the opposition Labour party, said Labour was determined to "assuage the effect (of the licence fee) on the most needy pensioners".

The aim would be to raise money from internal BBC savings and from commercial and industrial concerns such as hotels to avoid extra payments from the Treasury.

Wescot aims for Europe

Wescot Decision System, one of the UK's main reference agencies and consumer information groups, has changed its name to Equifax Europe in a move aimed at expanding its European operations.

The company's three divisions, which provide direct marketing, credit reference information, and computerised credit scoring, are also being renamed with the Equifax Europe brand name.

Business travel starts to pick up

British Airways has resumed its twice-weekly Concorde flights to Washington, axed at the start of the Gulf war because of the steep fall in top executives flying on business.

The move reflects the gradual improvement in business confidence in recent weeks, which has accelerated following the end of hostilities.

But business travel agents say the upturn in executive travel bookings is far less pronounced than the revival in demand for overseas package holidays experienced by holiday travel agents.

On Saturday, many travel agents reported their best day of the year so far for package holiday bookings.

House prices continue to fall

UK house prices in February fell for the fifth month running, according to Halifax, Britain's biggest housing society.

The society, which publishes a monthly house price index, said further interest rate cuts were needed to restore buoyancy to the weak housing market.

"We may be at the end of the downturn but there is no sign of any recovery yet. We have no evidence of any pick up in the number of house sales across the country," Halifax said.

Lamont urged on tax cuts

Conservative MPs are pressing Mr Norman Lamont, the chancellor of the exchequer, to concentrate tax concessions in his forthcoming budget on low earners and small businesses. They also want further measures to promote the government's "green image" and to encourage saving.

After a series of meetings



Norman Lamont: no spectacular tax cuts expected

MPs and Treasury ministers over the past few weeks, most of government supporters expect a relatively unexciting package on March 19.

Despite speculation about a June election, the message from ministers has been that the need to bring down inflation and interest rates must take priority over tax cuts. Tory MPs expect the budget to include net tax cuts of, at most, £1bn.

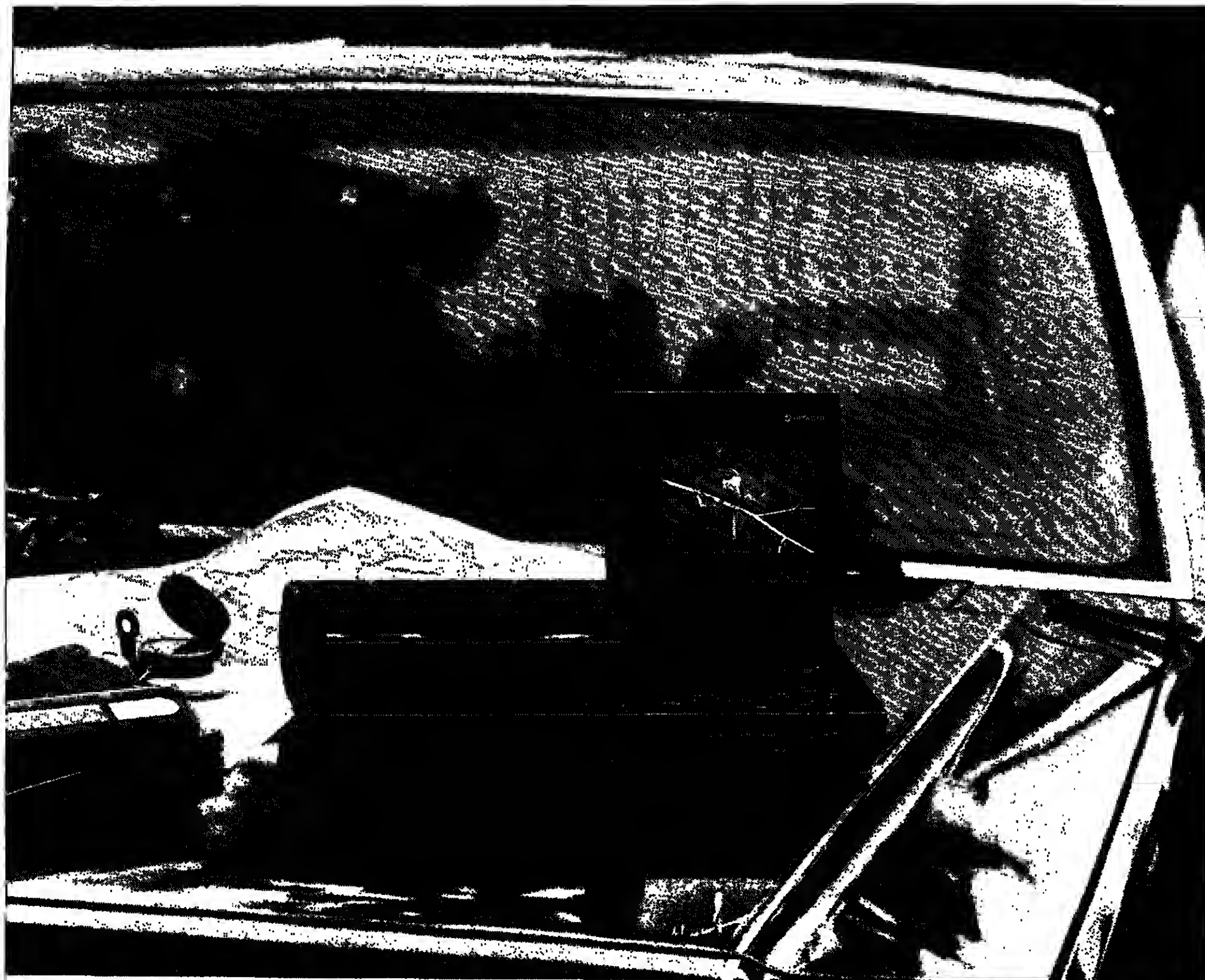
Kia cars to be sold in the UK

Korean-built Kia cars are to be sold in the UK in June with hopes for sales of 10,000 units by the end of 1992, according to MCL Group, the newly appointed importer.

First Bentley launched since 1952



Rolls-Royce Motor Cars staged a surprise introduction in Geneva of its Bentley Continental R coupé (above), the first uniquely styled Bentley to be launched since 1952. The coupé will also be the most expensive Rolls-Royce production car, with an indicative UK price of £180,000 compared with the £144,595 Silver Spirit. It was believed the car would not be ready for production until later in the 1990s, but Rolls-Royce completed the development programme much earlier than expected.



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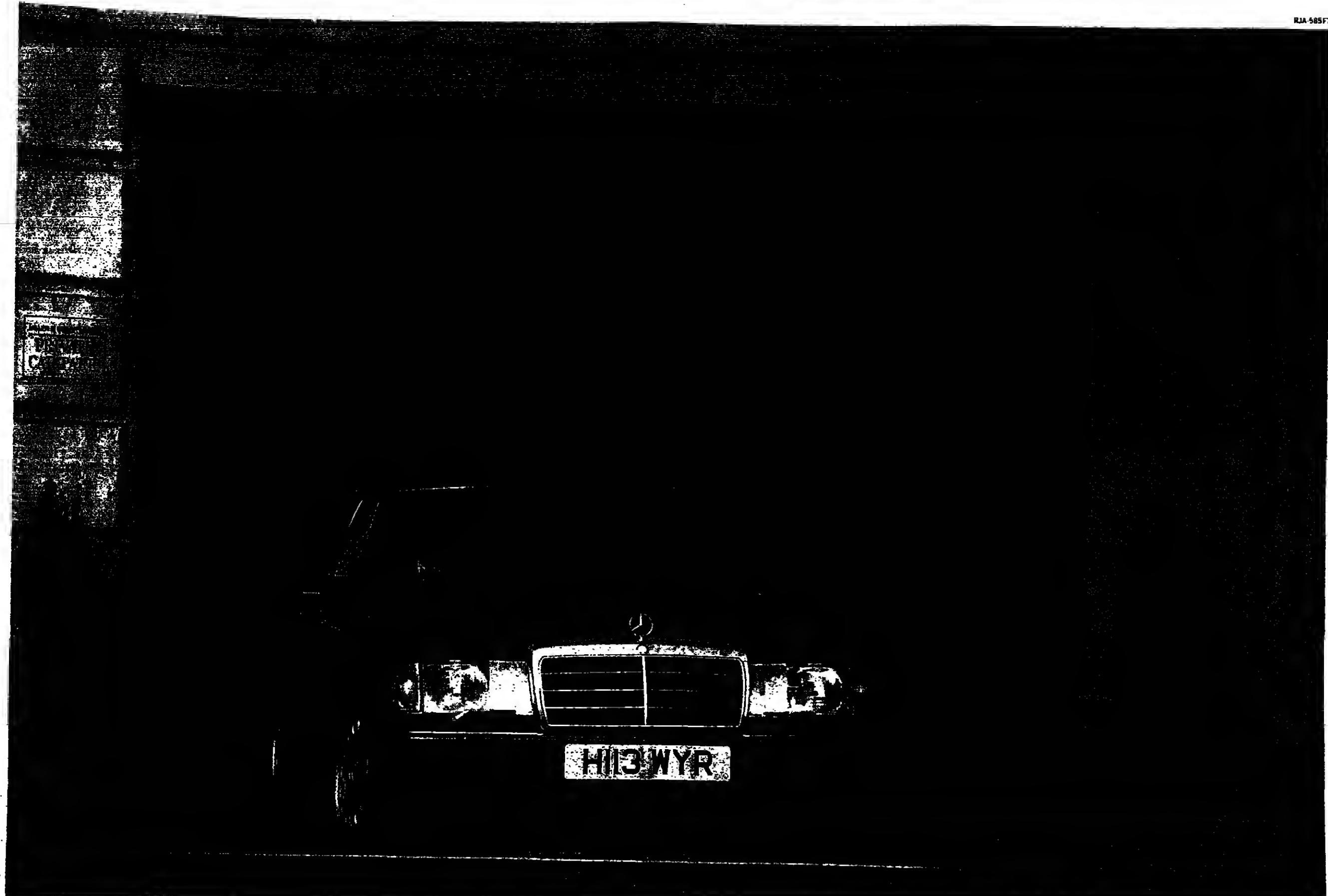
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UK NEWS

Exports insurance sell-off draws big foreign interest

By Peter Montagnon, World Trade Editor

STRONG FOREIGN interest has emerged in the government's proposed sale of the short term commercial risk insurance business of the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

The shortlist of six bidders who will be invited to tender includes Assicurazioni Generali of Italy and Cobac, the specialised Belgian credit insurance company, as well as NCM, the Dutch credit insurance business which has previously made its interest public.

The specialist credit insurance unit of Germany's Gerling also appears on the list as a minority partner in a consortium with Eagle Star.

The other two bidders - Trade Indemnity which dominates the domestic credit insurance market and Sun Alliance - have also previously announced their intention to enter the fray. The privatisation is intended to allow the short term insurance division to compete freely for business after the European insurance market is liberalised as part of the single market programme.

The inclusion of several foreign names prompted fresh expressions of concern from exporters. Mr John Hollows, Deputy Chairman of the British Exporters' Association, said: "The fear of our members

is that a non-UK purchaser would not have the UK interest at heart as much as a UK corporate."

Other exporters said they would be seeking assurances from the foreign bidders that their interests would be respected by a foreign owner. They said they were heartened by the presence of Sun Alliance and Eagle Star on the list as UK bidders establishing a counterweight to Trade Indemnity, which already dominates the domestic credit insurance market.

Announcing the shortlist yesterday, Mr Peter Lilley, Trade and Industry Secretary, said the bidders had all stated their willingness to purchase 100 per cent of the short-term business. But two of the companies, Sun Alliance and Eagle Star, said they would wait until they had scrutinised financial information on ECGD before deciding whether to go ahead with a bid.

ECGD's short term insurance division covers exports worth some £13bn a year. It made a loss of £190m in the financial year to April 1990 on premium income of £74m, but the loss related to loss provisions against business with indebted countries such as Nigeria, which is excluded from the sale.

Soviet cover under review

By Peter Montagnon

THE Export Credits Guarantee Department has placed the provision of medium-term credit cover for the Soviet Union under review following the deterioration in the economic outlook there.

The development has caused further anxieties among exporters who are concerned about the Treasury's growing imposition of restrictions on ECGD's activity, particularly in markets where it is already heavily exposed. These include China, Hong Kong, South Africa, Indonesia and India, as well as the Soviet Union.

Exporters to Indonesia have complained to the Department

of Trade and Industry that orders are being delayed by lack of ECGD cover, even though they are due to be financed by existing UK soft credit lines. Bankers say the General Electric Company has recently had to extend the validity of a £30m Indonesian tender for two months.

ECGD said yesterday it was too early to prejudge the outcome of its review of the Soviet Union. Payment arrears last year led it to insist on a counter-guarantee from the Soviet Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs, which has itself become very cautious about taking on new exposure.

Businesses to face pollution levies

By David Thomas, Resource Editor

BUSINESS premises which pollute Britain's waterways are to be charged up to £25,000 a year to pay for the cost of polluting their activities, under proposals announced yesterday by the National Rivers Authority.

The charges are an unprecedented attempt in Britain to make industry pay for the costs of anti-pollution activities. In the past, such activities have had to be met out of general taxation.

"Our costs should be met not by the general taxpayer, but by the people doing the polluting," said Mr Chris Savory, finance director of the authority, which monitors water quality.

The charges will raise \$41m a year from businesses holding 80,000 official consents to pollute the waterways of England and Wales.

Similar proposals are being prepared for Scotland.

Mr Savory estimated that 60 per cent of the projected cost will fall on the privatised water companies with 30 per cent being borne by other industrial and commercial companies. Agriculture is expected to pay the remaining 10 per cent.

A formula will be used to calculate the annual charge to businesses depending on the volume of material discharged, its nature and location.

For example, pesticide discharges will be given three times the weighting of metals, while discharges into river estuaries will be weighted 50 per cent more than those into rivers.

The NRA says the charges are intended solely to meet its pollution monitoring costs. The system of consents, not the charges, are intended to minimise pollution.

That is why the authority does not view the proposed new charges as a full-scale pollution tax.

However, the authority's officials acknowledge that the new charges could prompt some businesses to take a fresh

look at their polluting activities.

The NRA has calculated that the biggest annual charge is likely to be about £25,000 for a large discharge of pesticide into a river estuary.

The lowest charge is expected to be about £16 for small discharges of non-toxic liquids.

Comments on the proposals have to be sent to the Department of the Environment by April 30.

The scheme is due to start operating on July 1.

Charges in Respect of Discharges to Controlled Waters. NRA, PO Box 144, Sapphire East, Streatham Road, Solihull, West Midlands B31 1QT.

IT companies show trend towards rationalisation

By Alan Cane

ACQUISITIONS of information technology businesses increased by 16 per cent to 283 in 1990, according to Regent Associates, which collates data on IT mergers and acquisitions.

The data show an increasing rationalisation of the UK information technology business as large organisations seek to divest themselves of subsidiaries that are underperforming or outside their parent's core activities.

Regent predicts that the trend will continue this year.

Mr Peter Rowell, the managing director of Regent, said: "There will be many bargains

available for companies with strong cash resources and for foreign organisations that are willing to acquire a base in the UK."

Acquisitions by foreign companies in the UK market also showed an increase in 1990.

Some of these were strategic but in others, the lower valuations in the UK presented foreign buyers - the French in particular - with an ideal opportunity to move into the market.

The value of UK hardware companies fell by an average of 38 per cent in 1990 and 39 per cent for computing services companies.

Power struggle behind the UK telecoms duopoly

Charles Leadbeater on government efforts to encourage more competition in the communications industry

THE policy document on telecommunications published yesterday is the product of a power struggle over the future of the industry which has been going on for the past five months.

The main contestants in that struggle were Mr Peter Lilley, the trade and industry secretary, Sir Bryan Carsberg, the director general of OfTel, the industry regulator, and Mr Iain Vallance, chairman of British Telecom.

At stake was the shape of the telecommunications market, which last year was worth more than £13bn and, in particular, the position of BT, which dominates that market with a share of about 95 per cent.

The struggle for power and profits in the industry was set off in November, when the government published a far-reaching review of the market. It set out options for encouraging more competition to break up the duopoly of BT and Mercury Communications, its much smaller competitor, which controls the provision of fixed line telecommunications services to the public.

The review clearly identified BT's overwhelming dominance of the market as the main distortion which needed to be corrected to allow more competition. The proposals alarmed BT which foresaw the government and OfTel giving new competitors a large helping hand to eat into the com-

pany's market share.

Since November Mr Vallance has been leading a spirited rearguard action which culminated in a threat that the company would force the proposals to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission if it judged they were unfair.

That threat played upon two dilemmas facing the government. First, for all its enthusiasm in promoting competition, the government remains BT's largest shareholder with a 48 per cent stake. An MMC inquiry would have forced plans to sell the stake to be delayed.

Second, BT is so dominant that plans to reform the industry would be much harder to implement if it refused to co-operate. The threat of an MMC reference seems to have done the trick. It led to negotiations between BT, the DTI and OfTel, which produced a deal. Put simply, BT has been able to exact a price for co-operating with plans to introduce competition.

The terms of that deal are buried in the document's fine print. But its outline is suggested by comments made by Sir Bryan in an appendix. He says the White Paper marks a shift in government policy, away from the "managed competition" of the past seven years in which OfTel gave new entrants a hefty helping hand, towards a more open form of competition. Sir Bryan



Peter Lilley (right) and Bryan Carsberg: main contestants in the power struggle over future of telecommunications

says: "There is a danger that the assistance of new entrants can be carried too far."

He continues: "I want to see competition pressed to the limit of its ability to improve value for money to the customer - but no further. The way to achieve that is for the regulations to encourage more competition, to offer firm assurance that fair competition will be protected, but to insist that additional competitors must make their way without having the playing field tilted in their direction."

The White Paper's starting

point is that the duopoly should be ended by allowing new entrants to apply for licences.

However, this general prescription in favour of competition has qualifications. It is unlikely new licences will be granted for international operators. This is mainly because the slower pace of liberalisation in foreign markets would make it difficult for new UK operators to find partners abroad. The document also notes the arguments of BT and Mercury that in the long term they depend on profits from

international calls to finance investment in the UK. The limit on international competition is a success for BT.

In the domestic market competition will be enhanced on several fronts.

Large international companies will be the main beneficiaries of a complete liberalisation on the self provision of private internal networks. This means BT and Mercury will have to compete more fiercely with their own customers in providing private circuits.

Competition in the local network will be encouraged by moves to allow cable television companies, many of which are owned by US telecommunications groups, to carry telephone services as well as television. Adjacent cable franchises will be able to link their networks together.

The cable television operators will be protected from competition from BT and Mercury for 10 years, although this restriction on the duopolists' entering the market for conveying television services might be reviewed after seven years. The cable television industry has argued that this protection is essential to attract investment.

Another source of local competition should come from mobile telecommunications networks, such as cellular, telepoint and personal communications networks.

The cable television opera-

tors fear that consumers will get the fruits of competition by equal access to competing long distance carriers. As a result, they may be happy to rely upon BT's local network, as long as it gives them access to a choice of long distance providers. They argue this could trench BT at a local level. The government says this fear is overstated.

Yet for two reasons the threat is neither as immediate nor as great as it might seem. First, equal access will take time to introduce. Less than half BT's customers are served by switches which could readily provide equal access. The investment to provide equal access will take time. Full-blown equal access will only be introduced after a lengthy cost benefit analysis by OfTel.

Second, the main part of the price which BT has extracted for its co-operation has been an agreement to review its tariffs. This marks its most significant victory yet over OfTel.

At the end of the day none of the contestants will be unhappy. OfTel's role will expand. The government will get more competition without devaluing its shareholding in BT. The company recognised that competition was coming, will be nowhere near as handicapped as it once feared to meet it.

Seville

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MANAGEMENT

Employers are introducing special measures to contain the problem. Angus Foster reports

Hong Kong tries to plug its brain drain

What price freedom? That may be the question some Hong Kong companies are asking as they offer their managers "longevity bonuses".

In return for staying in Hong Kong rather than emigrating, key executives are being tempted by bonus schemes which mature after Hong Kong returns to China in 1997. The bonus usually consists of two to four months' salary for each year remaining. For some, the payout could top HK\$1m.

These schemes are now common in Hong Kong. The bonuses are the latest weapon in the fight against Hong Kong's "brain drain", a continuing flow of well educated professional Hong Kong ethnic Chinese leaving in search of a foreign passport. With Hong Kong's future uncertain, human resource management is, if not the most, one of the most pressing challenges for Hong Kong companies.

But it is not a crisis. Since the late 1980s when companies first realised the brain drain was worsening, they have learned to introduce new recruitment, training and promotion policies.

Assessing the brain drain is not an exact science. According to the Hong Kong government, which can only rely on indirect indicators, 62,000 people left the colony last year and a similar number are expected to leave this year.

That figure seems small compared with Hong Kong's population of over 5.5 million. The problem is that most of the emigrants are well educated, in their mid-30s and come from the professional and managerial class.

According to a study by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, based on data for 1987 and 1989, perhaps 60 per cent of the emigrants are well educated. The same study suggests that by 1990 3.6 per cent of Hong Kong's total pool of professionals, administrators and managers had been lost to emigration.

Companies' experience of emigration depends on their

type of business, how they are fighting emigration and, sometimes, a "sheep" mentality among employees.

Hong Kong Bank has over 1,000 managers among its 13,000 staff. Last year 94 managers emigrated, sharply up from 1988 and 1989 when the total was in the mid-60s. Jardine Matheson, Hong Kong's largest employer after the government, is losing a steady 5 per cent of its 1,000 managers to emigration each year, according to Martin Barrow, a director.

Emigration is seriously

depleting Hong Kong's pool of experience. And there is a wider perspective to the problem. If a husband leaves with his working wife, two vacancies are likely to arise. Or, if he moves job for a large sign-on bonus and two years' higher salary to build up a nest-egg before emigrating, he is likely to be replaced by someone else doing the same thing.

At Citibank, the largest US company in the colony, emigration is about 5-8 per cent, according to Steven Baker, division head for North Asia. But the total attrition rate among its 1,000 executives is 21 per cent, down from a peak of 29 per cent in 1987.

Fred Lam, general manager for corporate relations at Hong Kong Telephone, says the loss of experienced managers is worrying.

In order to attract experienced staff, employers have increased sign-on bonuses and

annual salary packages. Nicholas Chiu, employee relations manager at Esso (HK), says the company recently recruited two middle managers who earned HK\$14,000 a month at their previous job. To persuade them to move, they were given a 40 per cent pay rise.

Emigration has forced companies to rethink their attitudes to training, often for the better. Brian Renwick, senior manager for personnel, Hong Kong Bank, says training programmes have been shortened and opportunities for promotion improved. "There are opportunities to do things better. Our training is now faster, which it should have been, and it would have taken longer to speed it up without the brain drain," he says.

To cope with emigration, companies have a choice between fighting to retain their staff or adopting new strategies. Simply offering more money may not work. Among accountants, salaries rose by more than 25 per cent each year in 1988 and 1989. But accountancy firms continue to be among the hardest hit.

Some personnel managers believe that no amount of money, training or promotion can buy staff loyalty. According to Lam: "There is nothing you can do to stop people leaving. There is nothing you can offer in return for a passport except for a passport itself."

Small and even medium-sized companies rarely have overseas offices where they can send staff to acquire foreign passports. For these companies, the brain drain can be devastating. A small Hong Kong software company closed down last month after its two senior programmers decided to emigrate at the same time, according to KS Liu, its former managing director. "I could have started again, but the same thing would have happened," he says.

Companies which do have overseas offices are using them to help staff secure passports but the numbers are small. Despite its large North American network, Hong Kong Bank can only send four or five high



Hong Kong's key executives are being tempted with bonuses which mature after the colony returns to China in 1997

flyers overseas each year.

Citibank has been actively using its overseas network, according to Baker. "Virtually all our top performers who wanted to leave have been placed (overseas)," he says. A separate scheme for the bank's top 40 Hong Kong officers gives them emigration assistance if they stay in Hong Kong longer than planned. "This also allows us to have our senior local role models stay in place," Baker says.

Schemes now being put in place by the UK, US and other European countries offer passports or entry visas which need not be taken up immediately, even until after 1997.

Employees of British companies are being targeted under the British Nationality Package, which gives passports to 50,000 heads of households. The US changed its immigration rules last year to grant entry visas to 10,000 employees of US companies in Hong Kong; 5,000 have already applied.

But the schemes are not perfect, either offering too few passports or too little security. As a result, companies still need to find new sources of talent to cope with departures.

Companies like Hongkong Telephone and Hong Kong Bank, which prefer to recruit from within, have increased their graduate intakes. Hong Kong Bank has doubled the number of graduates it recruits

each year into its banking streams.

The strategy ties in with the government's policy to double the annual number of graduates to 15,000 by 1994/1995. Although this will keep graduate salaries stable, there are concerns that the government is sacrificing quality for quantity.

Among the emigrants who have "sung the song", the Cantonese phrase for gaining a foreign passport, few seem to be coming back to Hong Kong.

The government puts the figure at 10 per cent, although private studies suggest that is too high. Nevertheless, companies like Citibank and Jardine Matheson have increased their overseas recruitment campaigns, despite the costs. Citibank has lifted the percentage of its overseas hirings to 75 per cent from 25 per cent a few years ago by mainly targeting Asian graduates wanting to come back. As a result, about 20 per cent of the bank's executives now hold foreign passports, possibly the highest figure for a major company in Hong Kong.

But for some, especially smaller companies these strategies are too costly. As a result, they have stopped training altogether and are now relying on an ever increasing number of headhunters in Hong Kong to find people to fill positions.

James Watson tells David Owen what course he will chart for the employee-controlled NFC

A feeling of ownership

The flagship of employee control in the UK has a new captain.

On January 1, James Watson replaced Sir Peter Thompson as chairman of NFC, the transportation, travel and property group privatised through a novel employee buy-out in 1982. With economic conditions deteriorating and 45-50 per cent of the Bedford-based company's shares now in institutional hands, is a major overhaul of the singular NFC management culture in prospect?

No, is the too short answer - as anyone who has charted Watson's progress might have expected. The black-haired accountant has been with NFC throughout its private sector existence, serving in turn as

finance director and deputy chairman before assuming his current duties. "I have lived with the privatised NFC for eight years," he says. "Obviously one of my core values is employee share ownership."

But if continuity is the hallmark of the change-over, the new man will not be slavishly enacting the Thompson doctrine in every detail. In his unhurried way, he is perhaps more insistent than his predecessor that premium performance is another indispensable goal of the group.

And those aware of Sir Peter's conviction that "almost the only way you can get out of a business is for the people to say: 'We want to go,'" will detect a pronounced difference in Watson's more pro-active attitude towards atrophying divisions.

"I think there is nothing worse than retaining a business that the board and management do not think fits its strategic purposes," he says. "Whatever action we need to take in the business to make sure we achieve our longer term objectives we will take. I don't see that as any different from any other company - except that we might take slightly longer to make decisions about dealing with difficult problems."

There is no doubt that NFC adopts a kinder, gentler approach to employee relations than many of its peers. One example of this is the internal relocation agency that

son concurs with Sir Peter that a company with NFC's share ownership structure "cannot be making mega takeovers and splashing equity all over the place".

Such is the strength of NFC's cashflow, however, that Watson says he is "not actually finding that a limiting factor. We are talking about spending up to £150m-£160m a year," he adds. The group ended its last financial year - described by chief executive Jack Mather as "our busiest year for acquisitions" - comfortably geared at 34 per cent with debt of £78.1m.

Watson also supports the group's attachment of double voting rights to employee-owned shares on certain topics, such that a prospective buyer of NFC would effectively have to convince employees of the soundness of its aims.

Bigger say than other investors

"The double vote is there because we believe that employees in a business should have a bigger say than other investors in the ultimate decision of who should own the business," he says. "You do get takeovers that are not always in the best interests of the company... and employees will be just as discerning as anybody else if a company is performing badly or is badly led."

Watson denies that NFC's commitment to maintaining its employee-oriented culture might be wavering under pressure from the deteriorating economy or institutional shareholders. "I am not conscious that we have made any decision purely for institutional purposes," he says.

"Whatever action we need to take in the business to make sure we achieve our longer term objectives we will take. I don't see that as any different from any other company - except that we might take slightly longer to make decisions about dealing with difficult problems."

There is no doubt that NFC adopts a kinder, gentler approach to employee relations than many of its peers. One example of this is the internal relocation agency that

it runs to ensure that surplus staff are aware of vacancies throughout the organisation. But Watson argues that this works to the company's benefit as much as the employees'. "We don't like spending money on redundancy payments," he says.

Similarly, Watson feels strongly that the insulation of a feeling of ownership at every level of the group (90-95 per cent of employees are shareholders) pays very tangible dividends in terms of commitment and customer service. "If you go back ten years, the driver had a pork-pie hat and a cigarette hanging out of his mouth and wore greasy overalls," he recalls. "Now, they are all liveried and it is difficult to tell them apart from a manager."

"The transport business today is all about quality; it is about having a relationship with your customer right down the pitch. Employee share ownership is an absolute ace card in that situation."

As the group becomes more international in line with its aim of generating 40 per cent of profits outside the UK by 1995, it is encountering the problem of how to give its overseas employees access to the same share ownership opportunities as their domestic counterparts.

It began to address this last year with the launch of an American Depository Receipt programme in the US. A US Employee Share Ownership Plan that Watson says will "pass on as much tax benefit as we can to the US employees" is to be introduced in a couple of months' time.

These efforts are now likely to switch to Europe. "Whether we have 500 or 5,000 employees in, say, Spain, we have to give them the benefits of an NFC shareholding in their own legislative and financial environment."

In terms of adapting the group's existing share-saving and profit-sharing packages, Watson's principal thrust will be to ensure that there is as direct a link as possible between benefits and measurable performance. "I think we need to make sure that what we have absolutely punches its weight right down on the shop-floor," he says.

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BUSINESS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Nerc's budget shrinks

The Natural Environment Research Council (Nerc), which published its 1991 corporate plan this week, expects its research budget to shrink in real terms by 10 per cent over the next five years, in spite of the importance the government claims to accord its research.

It can manage without big economies this year but must find extra cash if it is to sustain some of the medium-term objectives of its corporate plan, says John Knill, chairman.

Knill sees the 1990s as "a decade of challenge for the environmental sciences" and his research council as the "lead UK agency for research, survey and training in the natural environmental sciences". Its budget from government for 1991-92 is £125m.

Internationally, Nerc-supported scientists have played a leading role in the assessment of climate change sponsored by the World Meteorological Organisation and the UN Environment Programme, he says.

One new programme to which Nerc gives high priority is the EC's terrestrial initiative in global environmental research, which aims to shed more light on possible man-made changes to the world's climate. Nerc will carry out studies of ocean circulation and computer modelling of the global atmosphere.

It is also planning research of more local or regional interest, such as studies of pollution pathways from land to water and their implications for ground water purity. It has failed to win more funds for its Antosub scheme of developing autonomous submersibles for ocean surveillance. But it intends to continue its present level of development for these unmanned, pre-programmed ocean sensor systems.

In space research, Nerc plans to make speedy use of data from the new European earth satellite ERS-1.

David Fishlock

"Corporate Plan of the Natural Environment Research Council. Available from Nerc, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1EU.

The logistics of distributing goods always has been an important cost centre for businesses. But companies now find that efficient distribution systems deliver an added benefit by reducing their impact on the environment.

In the past companies which have boasted about environmental benefits from improved distribution systems have made the changes for cost reasons. But now the environment is increasingly being included as a criterion when improvements are made to transport systems, says David Smith, head of environment services at PA Consulting Group.

This change is reflected by a new environmental research project initiated by the Institute of Logistics and Distribution Management in Corby, Northamptonshire. A team of experts will examine the impact of logistics practices on the environment. A handbook, to be produced by the institute, will give advice on how operators can green their operations.

The institute's researchers could learn from the experience of Tesco, the 380-store UK supermarket chain. It has reaped both cost and environmental benefits from its decision to develop what it calls a composite distribution system.

While the company has been criticised for developing new stores in greenfield sites outside towns - which encourages customers to drive longer distances - it is generally applauded for taking environmental issues seriously.

It has a team of 300 people working on the greening of its organisation. This affects nearly every aspect of the business, from providing "stress-free" steak to using recycled paper in the till roll.

Tesco's composite distribution system has reduced the number of vehicles needed to re-supply a store from a minimum of five a day to one. The new system has also cut the number of distribution centres from 41 to 18.

This has been achieved by being able to store different types of products - fresh, frozen, chilled, for example - on one site. Then, by dividing the delivery lorries into three temperature-controlled compartments, many of the goods stored by a store are delivered on a single load.

Stores are re-supplied in "waves" and have many deliveries a day, but the overall number has been reduced by 80 per cent.

Sainsbury's, one of Tesco's

Peter Knight explains how an efficient distribution system saves energy and reduces product wastage

A green machine delivers the goods

Composite distribution

Group	Nominal temp	Tolerance	Products
Frozen	-20 Degrees C	±2 Degrees C	All frozen foods
Cold chill	0 Degrees C	±2 Degrees C	Fresh meat, fish, poultry, bacon
Chill	+5 Degrees C	±2 Degrees C	Provisions & most produce
Semi-ambient	+10 Degrees C	±2 Degrees C	Some produce
Ambient		6 Degrees C min	Grocery and non-food

Source: Tesco

competitors, pioneered the composite distribution centre in the UK. But the ability to use a single lorry, rather than a succession of trailers at different temperatures, was delayed until the necessary technology was developed.

"The trailer-makers said it could not be done," says Paul Bateman, Tesco's distribution director. "But we and the National Freight Corporation put up some development money and worked closely with trailer manufacturers to develop the right product."

A trailer with three movable bulkheads and separate cooling systems was perfected in the late 1980s. The temperature in each compartment can be controlled to within 1 deg C, within the necessary range of minus 20 deg C to 15 deg C.

Integral to the success of any distribution network is its information flow. The logistics of distribution is composed of the physical flow and the information flow. The two are interdependent," says Ray Jewitt, partner in charge of logistics at Andersen Consulting.

Bateman says Tesco's stock management system is "absolutely critical" to the efficiency of their system. Over the past

five years better computer systems have helped halve the amount of stock Tesco carries. Bateman says the composite distribution provides the following benefits:

● Daily deliveries, which help to reduce the levels of stock held at distribution centres and the stores.

● Fresher food, which is therefore more attractive to the customer.

● Computerised forecasting - based on past records - which helps to reduce the amount of times a store is left without stock.

● Economies of scale and better use of equipment. This reduces waste, especially of highly perishable goods.

These benefits were sufficient for Tesco's board to justify the £170m investment it needed to develop composite distribution.

Bateman believes that most cost efficiencies also benefit the environment. "For example, we are always keen to use less fuel. This saves us money and it also reduces emissions."

Tesco also insists that its truck suppliers reduce noise levels. Besides dampening engine noise, Tesco fits brake silencers which prevent the

heart-thumping woosh from air-brakes on large trucks. The trucks are fitted with foils to improve their aerodynamics, which cuts fuel consumption.

The trailers are insulated so that the noisy refrigeration units can be switched off when trucks are unloaded in residential areas, often at night.

The composite distribution system reduces the number of refrigeration units needed, and therefore the amount of CFCs used. Tesco's latest freezer units use an ammonia-based system rather than CFCs.

The company has also introduced standardised plastic trays to hold most of the loose goods. It sells these to its suppliers and insists that all goods be packed and delivered in the trays, which last for about three years.

But Bateman is especially happy with the efficiency of a standard packing pallet in Britain which makes unloading quick and easy. "There is no standard pallet board in the US. What takes us around 40 minutes to unload takes them up to eight hours," he says.

Tesco's distribution centres are designed to use energy as efficiently as possible. The company also practises what

Bateman calls "strict control over temperature regimes" and a "low-leak policy".

This means that temperatures are kept at the optimum level to suit the products that pass through the building, rather than the people who work there. This makes working conditions in some parts of the warehouses similar to toiling on the north face of the Eiger. Staff are issued with thermal underwear and woolly hats. Deep green environmentalists, who have long argued for the benefits of woolly jumpers, would be impressed.

Tesco is, quite legitimately, using the efficiencies of its distribution system to bolster its green image. But Jewitt does not think people are going out of their way to make environmental improvements, he says.

But he does see environmental factors playing an important role in shaping logistics practices in the future. The first impact is already being felt in political pressure to improve Europe's congested transport network.

As the European trade barriers fall, the amount of cross-border traffic is expected to rise. This will increase the impact that transport has on the environment, by producing more pollution from vehicles and greater congestion on the roads.

Jewitt says companies are looking at the benefits of moving goods long distances by a combination of transport systems, say road and rail, known as "intermodal transport".

The efficiency of some continental rail systems combined with the flexibility of road transport will produce attractive cost benefits. And with the resurgence of rail transport there will be inevitable benefits for the environment - from reduced exhaust emissions and less road traffic.

Work is also under way to apply rigorous logistical thinking to packing. The efficiency of fitting as much as possible into a box, for example, saves space and packing materials. Computer software, such as a program called Pallet Manager made by Goal of Swansea, helps in this exercise.

But if European business is going to achieve greater efficiencies in its distribution systems it will have to agree on something that will make Jewitt and his colleagues in the logistics business truly happy - a standard Euro-pallet.

Alternative fuel in the slow lane

By Barbara Durr

For the millions of car owners who simply turn on their vehicles' engine and drive away it may be surprising how little is known about internal combustion.

Exactly what happens under the hood is the subject of a multimillion-dollar investigation by the US auto and oil industries. They are being pressed by new clean air regulations to come up with less environmentally damaging products.

Results from the first phase of the Auto/Oil Air Quality Improvement Research Programme have been announced in Washington late last year, but were hardly definitive on how to solve the pollution problem.

The programme did reveal three important findings, however:

● Oxygenates, which help petrol burn more cleanly, reduce exhaust emissions (hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide).

● Changing the level of olefins in petrol does not have great impact on emissions.

● Reducing aromatics and/or the boiling range of petrol can either reduce or increase emissions depending on the vehicle.

In short, finding clean alternative fuels and mixtures is complicated; if you resolve one problem you create others. More exact answers will have to be found soon, though, because the new US Clean Air Act requires that all companies come up with a fuel that produces 15 per cent less pollution by 1995 for the country's nine most contaminated cities.

Amoco, a Chicago-based oil company participating in the study along with 13 other oil companies and General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, has been testing various fuels and fuel combinations at its Naperville, Illinois test site outside Chicago.

Al Kozinski, Amoco's vice president of research, says that compressed natural gas (CNG) has the most potential to solve the smog problems. CNG produces low hydrocarbon emissions and those that it does give off are not very reactive with other elements.

It also presents an improvement over petrol when starting up the engine, the point at

which even relatively clean cars produce most emissions because their catalytic converters need to warm up before they function properly.

CNG does produce some carbon monoxide, however, as well as nitrous oxides. Another drawback is the greater volume of fuel needed to travel the same distance. In a Dodge van equipped to test CNG, for example, it took two containers of five cubic feet each - roughly the space of two boots in a small compact car - to carry enough fuel to go about 150 miles. Impractical, Kozinski admitted, for the family car, but a possibility for commercial truck and van fleets.

Refuelling is tricky, too, he said. To dispense CNG a compressed gas station is needed. While fleet owners could install their own and bring the CNG costs to within about 10 cents of the US price of petrol, individual car owners, relying on commercial dispensers, would probably pay 50 cents or more over petrol.

Still, CNG looks relatively economical - at about \$2 per million BTUs at the well head - and plentiful. Amoco would be pleased to see it become the alternative fuel of choice because it holds the largest US reserves of natural gas.

While somewhat self-serving, Amoco contends that other fuel options - methanol, ethanol and liquefied petroleum gas - have certain virtues but tend to be more expensive to produce and are less plentiful than natural gas. And, none of these is the perfect ecological fuel.

A different barrier, but one that is key to the future use of alternative fuels, is the vehicle itself. Cars that can use alternative fuels are only being built on a test basis and Kozinski estimated that it would cost between \$1,800 and \$2,000 to convert a passenger car for CNG.

But even then, Amoco's researchers said, they believe that switching back to petrol once a week is better for the cars. On top of other smogs, CNG or methanol mixes tended to mean more wear on cars. "It would be nice if there were some easy answers," sighs Kozinski.



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ICELAND

Wednesday, March 6 1991

■ Tough measures bring greater stability to the economy: see page 3

■ A strategic base for surveillance of Soviet naval forces: see page 2

ICELAND faces a genuine dilemma about its future which threatens to grow more serious over the years. It must seek to reconcile its independence as a small nation with the growing pressures being imposed upon it by the outside world, particularly from the integration of western Europe.

As a small, geographically isolated island with a population of only a quarter of a million, located in the remote but strategically important waters of the north Atlantic, Iceland values its identity as a self-governing democracy based on the principles of the market economy. Ever since their formal declaration of independence from Danish rule in 1944, the Icelanders have built up their country through the strength and ingenuity of their own efforts.

By international standards, Iceland is one of the most affluent countries in the world. Its people live longer than most others and its infant mortality rate is almost zero. Most modern consumer durables are owned in abundance. Icelanders read more books than any other people in the world and they are among the best educated.

They defend their ancient language with ferocity from the intrusions of English. But appearances can be deceptive. Iceland knows full well it cannot survive on its own. Its very existence has always depended on the goodwill of others. The country's wealth is almost wholly derived from the success of its fishing industry. Indeed, fish dominates every conversation. Iceland is the world's most developed nation to rely - like a Third World country - on the ups and downs of one commodity.

Between 70 and 90 per cent of its exported goods in the post-war years have come from fishing and fish processing, even though the industry accounts for only 17 per cent of the country's workforce.

The defence of the fishing industry remains vital for Iceland's prosperity, but its well-being rests primarily on factors that lie outside the country's own control like changing consumer tastes in the export markets and the



The resolute people of Iceland have accepted, albeit slowly, that their economic destiny

now lies with western Europe, but Icelandic negotiators insist that their country's special needs must be recognised, says Robert Taylor, who wrote this survey.

Ambivalent Europeans

size of the catch which can vary year on year. Iceland's security rests on the American military presence at the Keflavik base and on membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, while its economic interests brought Iceland into membership of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1947 and the European Free Trade Association in 1970.

However, despite its growing links to the outside world, Iceland has moved only slowly in compromising its national sovereignty. After all, it was only through its unilateral actions that the country eventually established a 200-mile exclusive fishing zone around its coastline in 1975 to protect its main natural resource from others.

What worries many Icelanders is a sense of their country's vulnerability. As a result, they have been cautious about forging closer ties with other nations, preferring a rather semi-detached position towards western Europe, the United States and the Soviet Union. In the words of Gunnar Heigi Kristinnsson at the University of Reykjavik Iceland in the recent past has been "a reserved European."

But as part of Efta, Iceland is involved in the current negotiations with the European Community on the creation of a European Economic Area to come into force on 1 January 1993 - and this has meant coming to terms with a wide range of necessary changes as the country has begun to dismantle the plethora of controls and regulations surrounding its economy and embrace a more open, liberalised market system.

However, Iceland's negotiators know - and so do their colleagues in Efta and the EC - that unless the country can achieve a special deal with the EC to safeguard its fishing industry, it will be unable to agree to any rapprochement with western Europe.

"For us, relations with Europe are a much bigger question than for most," insists Mr Jon Hannibalsson, Iceland's foreign minister. In other European countries, fish is a marginal, heavily-subsidised industry, but not here. Our national survival is utterly reliant on fishing. We cannot enter into any economic relationship with Europe on the basis of free trade if our main industry is excluded."

But today Iceland's fishing

industry is more than ever dependent on access to the markets of the EC. Around 60 per cent of its fish and fish products now go to EC countries. The decline in the value of the American dollar has hurt trade with the US. Since 1972, there has been a free trade agreement between Iceland and EC on free trade in frozen fish, a better deal than the country achieved from Efta until 1989.

But fish industry employers lament what they regard as the threat to their interests posed by the common fisheries policy in the EC and the changes which have occurred in the industry since 1972, such as the growth of processed fish products and fish farming, have meant that less than 60 per cent of Iceland's fish exports to the EC countries are free of duties.

The EC may be happy to see fresh fish from Iceland in its markets, but high imports threaten to make the country's fish processing industry uncompetitive to the EC. "Our main aims in negotiations with the EC are clear," asserts Mr Hannibalsson. "We want tariff-free access for all our fish and marine products,

but of the same time we need to safeguard our fish resources."

"The EC talks of the four freedoms in the internal market, but we need a fifth - the freedom of seafood trade," insists Mr Magnus Gunnarsson, head of the Union of Icelandic Fish Producers.

Actual membership of the EC is not on Iceland's current political agenda. Indeed, the prime minister, Mr Steingrímur Hermannsson, asserts: "We don't believe full membership would suit us. Our economy is so different from that of Europe."

He wants to ensure national control over fishing, hydro power and land-ownership. Mr Ólafur Hannibalsson, the foreign minister is a little less hostile, but he, too, argues "no long-term acceptable solution with the EC can be achieved unless we can achieve a free trade in fish products."

Most want to use the collective bargaining power of Efta to prevent Iceland's isolation from the EC. Iceland's leaders are well aware that their country's dependence on fish for its livelihood constrains their room for manoeuvre, so they are increasingly keen to encourage

a greater diversification of the economy.

Exploiting Iceland's enormous under-utilised resources of hydro and geothermal power could make a useful contribution to the economy. As Mr Halldor Joantansson, general manager of the country's National Power company explains: "Only 8 per cent of that power - 4.2 TWh a year - has been developed so far."

A feasibility study has been made into the possibility of exporting 500MW of electrical power annually from Iceland to Scotland through a 90km-long submarine cable to provide energy for the British consumer. It has been estimated that this could be done at a price competitive with nuclear energy, oil and coal, though the initial cost of such a scheme would total \$1.6bn - made up of the expenditure on the cable and construction of power projects to produce the electricity.

Mr Cecil Parkinson took a keen interest in the idea when he was UK energy secretary, but there has been less enthusiasm more recently in the Department of Energy, perhaps because of the uncertainties with the privatisation of the supply industry.

Another project that could exploit Iceland's energy resources is the so-called Atlantic scheme to construct a huge aluminium smelter on the island. This could have a large and beneficial impact on the economy by 1995, but the foreign consortium behind the project has yet to finally clinch the deal because of lack of finance which it is now trying to raise.

As a live volcanic island of rugged, spectacular scenery often reminiscent of the surface of the moon, Iceland remains an unspoiled wilderness, which should have an increasing appeal for a more discriminating kind of tourist.

Ms Kristin Halldorsdottir, head of the Tourist Board, wants to build up tourism carefully - "we don't want too many visitors," she argues. But Iceland has potential for those who want to calm their aching limbs and minds in its hot springs, go on adventure holidays in its mountains or simply see the sights. A special effort is being made to attract the Japanese, though Germans are the largest contingent now coming for holidays.

But Mr Gunnarsson at the Icelandic Fish Producers is right to assert that Iceland's

future will remain dependent on its fishing industry. Every discussion comes back to that imperative. This is why (to the exasperation of Brussels, no doubt), Icelandic negotiators insist their country can never hope to fully integrate into the new Europe unless its special needs are recognised and taken care of.

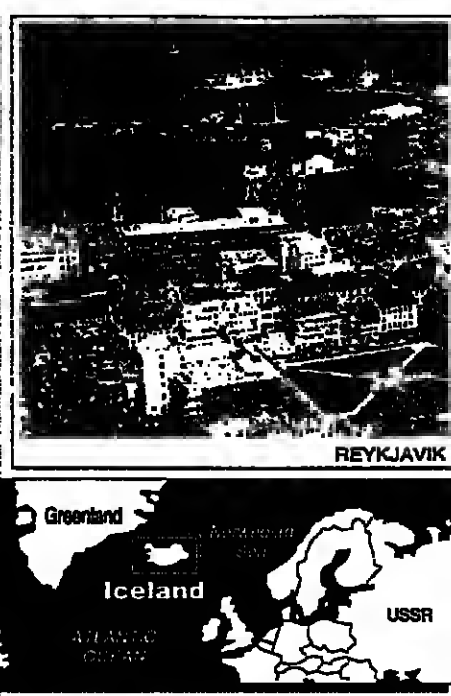
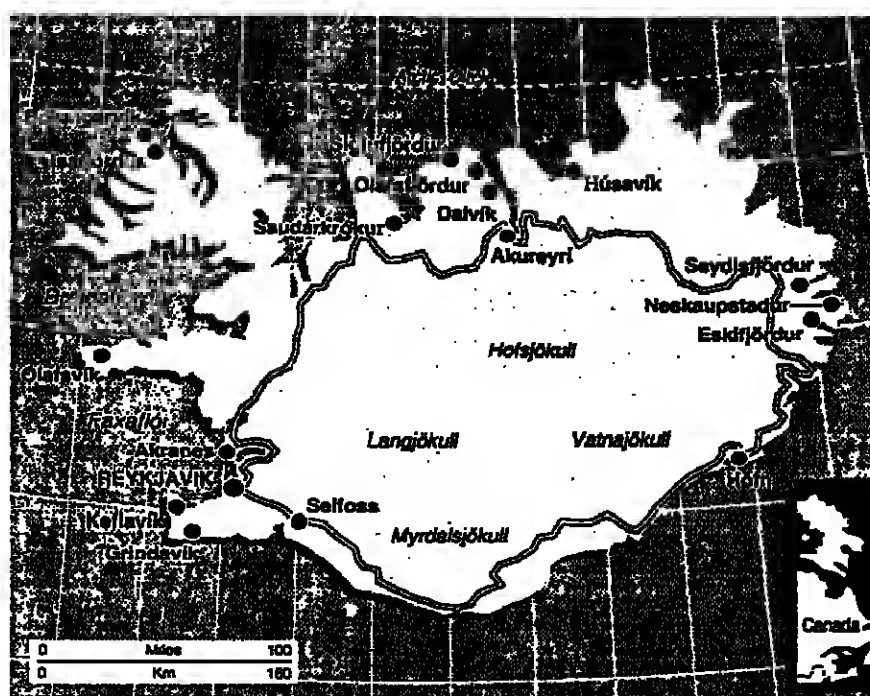
Over the past few years, Iceland has accepted, albeit slowly, that its destiny lies with western Europe. Despite some anxieties, it is adjusting its economy in a more deregulated, liberal direction, particularly in the financial markets with the gradual removal of foreign exchange controls.

Moreover, public opinion polls suggest most Icelanders are ready to seek EC membership. But as Gunnar Kristinnsson argues the government strategy of adaptation through Efta coupled with a bilateral approach to secure access for Icelandic fishery products inside the European fish markets can only work "if the EC decides to take a benevolent attitude" of their needs.

If the government's strategy fails, "a debate is likely between those who place their main emphasis on political sovereignty and those who give a higher priority to economic progress," says Mr Kristinnsson. This would mean an open national debate about where Iceland's future lies, on whether the country can balance its conception of political sovereignty with its economic freedom. It is probable but not utterly certain that the outcome would be the integration of Iceland into western Europe.

As so often, this depends on how others see Iceland and whether they accept the strength of the country's genuine case for special treatment. But it would be wrong to suggest Iceland is a weak supplicant whose future inevitably lies inside the EC. Culturally and economically, the case for this might look irresistible. Yet it seems just as likely that the country will have to find its own way forward and reach a *modus vivendi* with the EC that stops short of membership.

A proud and resolute people, the Icelanders are not going to sacrifice their own interests for any wider European idea.



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ICELAND 2

Strong defence links with NATO and the US

Vital base for naval surveillance

ICELAND is a paradox. A founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, it has never had any military forces of its own. The US, through its possession of the Keflavik base in the south west of the island, provides for Iceland's basic defence, as a result of a bilateral treaty, signed between the two countries in 1951.

Iceland's policy of NATO membership and no arms reflects an ambivalence that lies at the heart of the country's attitude to the outside world. Emotionally, Icelanders would like to be alone, setting a moral example of how to live for others to follow.

This righteous aspiration was enshrined in the movement for independence from Danish rule - "we see ourselves as a far-away, peace-loving country," says Mr Albert Jonsson at the Commission on Security and International Affairs. "We are reluctant to recognise we have obligations and responsibilities to face up to."

The US military presence on the island has been the object of opposition over the years, but not recently. The US forces, in fact, behave with sensitivity - its 22,000 personnel at Keflavik keep very much to themselves and when they

leave the base they do not go out in uniform.

Moreover, Keflavik costs the Icelandic taxpayer nothing. Indeed, it is a bargain for the country, actually making a positive contribution to its economy estimated at around 7 per cent of export earnings.

Support for NATO and the US base is now quite strong - "the base is not an issue," declares Mr Jon Hannibalsson, Iceland's foreign minister. "Satellite television is more of a danger to our way of life."

Anti-Americanism is hard to find nowadays - "don't forget, the US was the first country to recognise our independence in 1944," adds Mr Hannibalsson. "Our young people are increasingly going to the US to be educated."

Icelanders, however, are not poodles of American power: they want to exercise their moral authority. They can in foreign policy. This helps to explain the recent support given by the Icelandic Parliament to the independence movements in the Baltic states, especially Lithuania.

"There is a feeling that it is the duty of small nations to demonstrate their solidarity with each other," states Mr Hannibalsson. He points out that Iceland did not recognise Stalin's annexation of the Bal-

tic states in 1940 and is merely re-asserting its conviction that they should be independent.

Whether this will lead to eventual diplomatic recognition for them by Iceland remains in doubt, though it remains the logical next step. If the result is a rupture of relations with Moscow it may prove too high a price for Iceland to pay.

The country is also keen to press its NATO partners on a non-nuclear approach to naval

disarmament. Since 1988 the Icelandic government has sought to widen the east-west arms control talks to cover nuclear weapons at sea.

A number of accidents in northern waters involving Soviet submarines has given this demand greater urgency - "the build-up of Soviet naval forces is both a military danger and an ecological disaster for the north," says Mr Hannibalsson.

Their submarines are potential floating Chernobyls. At a

stroke, one of them could destroy Iceland.

So far, the rest of NATO and in particular the US and Britain have not accepted Iceland's pressure to include naval disarmament in their negotiations with the Soviet Union.

But the country cannot escape from the logic of its geography. As Steve Miller argued in a recent study from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Iceland occupies a crucial geo-strategic location, astride the waters that connect the Norwegian and Barents Seas to the open ocean of the North Atlantic.

It is sometimes said to be the cork that keeps the Soviet Navy bottled up north of the Greenland-Iceland-UK (GIUK) gap.

"Our fate is inevitably linked to that of the US and Britain," admits Mr Albert Jonsson at the Commission on Security and International Affairs. This is why the UK government occupied Iceland in May 1940 as a pre-emptive move to thwart Hitler and why, in July 1941, four months before Pearl Harbour - President Roosevelt agreed to station ground troops there.

Since World War Two, Iceland has been seen as a crucial

base for surveillance of Soviet naval forces from Murmansk and the Kola peninsula. The melodramatic novel by Tom Clancy - *Red Storm Rising* - has highlighted the importance that Iceland would play in any Soviet military offensive against the west.

But nowadays the tensions of the past seem a distant memory - "there has been a dramatic drop in the number of Soviet air sorties around Iceland," says Mr Albert Jonsson of Iceland's Commission on Security and International Affairs.

Yet it seems most unlikely that Iceland is about to lose its strategic importance for the US, whatever happens to the future defence of continental Europe. Steve Miller at SIPRI emphasises that the American role stems from its 1951 bilateral treaty with Iceland, not the needs of NATO.

If the alliance was run down or the US decided to pull its forces out of mainland Europe, it would really make little difference to the durability of the American-Icelandic military relationship. As Miller explains, the US has a "permanent concern with the Soviet Navy, in particular because of its enduring interest in pursuing Soviet ballistic missile submarines in northern waters."

Nowadays the former international tensions over Soviet sorties around Iceland seem a distant memory

Political squabbles over taxation policies

Government change expected in April

ICELAND holds its next general election on April 20 and a change of government is expected. The Independence Party - in opposition since September 1988 - looks set to make big gains which may prove enough to ensure it plays an important part in the make-up of the next coalition.

This will not come as a surprise. Independence has held power in alliance with other parties for 35 out of the past 47 years. It retains strong roots across a broad cross-section of the electorate but with a particular strength in the urban areas.

At the last general election in 1987, Independence performed rather badly, falling to only 30 per cent of the vote, but this was mainly due to a split in the ranks immediately prior to polling day with the emergence of a breakaway group - the Citizen's party - which actually won seven seats in the 63-strong parliament.

Next month that particular party looks set to disappear from parliament with most of its electoral support expected to return to the Independence fold. Opinion polls suggest that the party could well achieve half the vote next month, but

this seems an unlikely outcome to most observers.

The party's present leader, Mr Thorsteinn Pálsson, who was prime minister from April 1987 to September 1988, accepts he will probably have to forge a coalition with others if he hopes to return to office this spring. He believes Independence lies closest to the Social Democrats, who will be "easier to negotiate with."

In his opinion, a new government with his party as the dominant force would be better able to reach an agreement, through Efta, on the creation of a credible European Economic Area because his party takes a more positive view of closer relations with western Europe. He also argues that Independence is more ready than the present coalition parties to pursue free market policies designed to attract foreign investment to the country.

He believes the main division between his party and the others lies in taxation policy. Mr Pálsson wants to cut taxes and stimulate the economy. Indeed, he promised - rather rashly, some believe - to restore the level of taxation to what it was two and a half years ago when he was last in office, something that finance

minister Mr Olafur Grimsson ridicules as he attacks Mr Pálsson's alleged "irresponsibility" over economic management.

To the outside world, squabbles over taxation may seem a rather trivial issue to decide what happens in the general election, especially when Iceland faces difficult and crucial decisions it must make soon over its future relations with western Europe.

But as elsewhere in the Nordic region, the political leaders seem more intent to fudge or divert the attention of the voters away from complex questions that could divide the traditional political system. As a

result, public conflict looks bogus and parochial in Iceland, focusing more on personalities than genuine issues, let alone ideology.

For his part, Iceland's prime minister Mr Steingrímur Hermannsson who leads the Progressive party, is keen to stress his government's economic achievement over the past two and a half years, particularly the readiness to take temporarily unpopular measures. The Progressives - like the Centre parties in Scandinavia - draw their support mainly from the rural areas but the party is more than just a pressure group for the agricultural

interest. Indeed, under Mr Hermannsson's leadership, the party has gone much further than many of its more traditional supporters would have liked towards creating a more liberal, open market economy.

There is little doubt that the Social Democrats as coalition partners have been keen to urge the Progressives into following a more market oriented strategy - "we are adapting our policies to be in line with European practice to reap the benefits of increased competition," declares Mr Jon Hannibalsson, the foreign minister and leader of the Social Demo-

Continued on facing page

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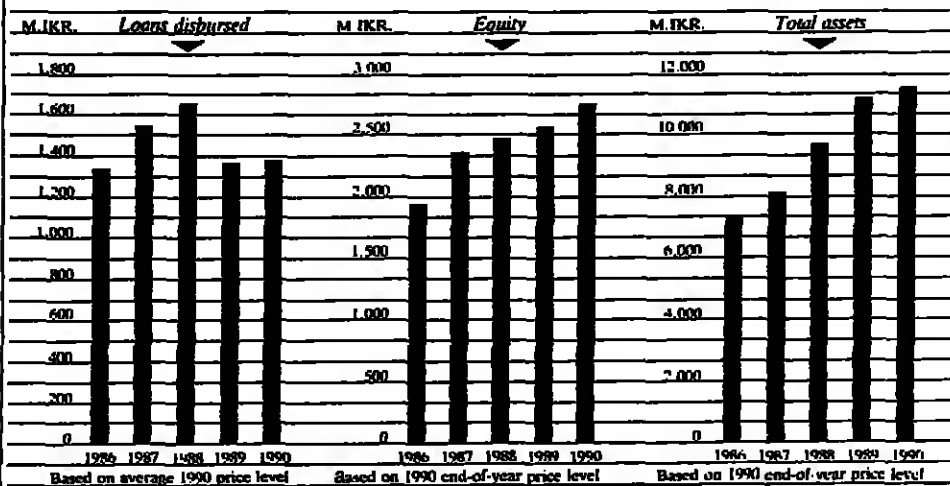
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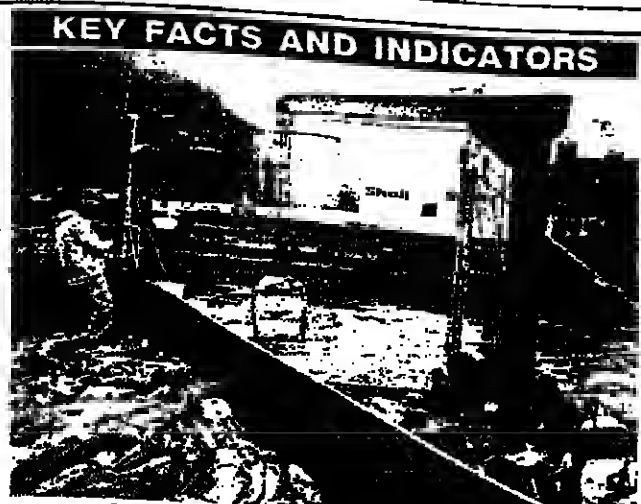
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ICELAND 3

Tough measures pay off, but they cost the government much electoral popularity

Rapid move towards economic stability



A fishing trawler unloads at Reykjavik

Area 103,000 sq km
Population 254,000 (1990 estimate)
Currency Krona (IKR)
Average exchange rate, 1989 \$1 = IKR57.04, 1990 \$1 = IKR58.28

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

	1989	1990
Total GDP (\$bn)	5.1	5.6
Real GDP growth (%)	-3.3	-0.3
GDP per capita (\$)	20,610	22,400
Consumer prices (% change p.a.)	20.3	15.5
Unemployment (%)	13.3	9.1
Wage rates (% change p.a.)	1.6	n.a.
Total fish catch ('000s of tons)	1505.3	1381.7
Reserves minus gold (\$m)	337.3	433.7
M1 growth (% p.a.)	34.7	27.6
Discount rate (% p.a.)	38.4	21.0
Current account balance (\$m)	-93.3	n.a.
Exports (\$m)	1401.5	n.a.
Imports (\$m)	1267.3	n.a.
Trade balance (\$m)	134.2	n.a.
Main trading partners, (1989, % by value)		
United Kingdom	20.8	8.1
United States	14.3	11.0
West Germany	11.9	13.1
European Community	58.4	51.1
EFTA	11.0	19.1

* Latest figure, at annual rates. Sources: IMF, OECD, EU.

ICELAND'S economy has achieved a measure of stability over the past 12 months that it has not known for more than 30 years. Indeed, as Mr Olafur Grimson, Iceland's finance minister, declares: "We have achieved a unique record."

"In the forthcoming election, the issue - as it has been for nearly half a century - will not be on how to get down the rate of inflation, improve conditions for the fishing industry, how to devalue the currency or achieve a positive trade balance."

"The centre-left coalition has given Iceland a better economic performance than any other European government has achieved over the past three years," he asserts.

"We have taken the tough measures that were necessary. When I became finance minister in September 1988, we were facing economic catastrophe. We had no choice but to act."

Mr Grimson argues that, during his term in office, he has proved that Iceland "does not have to live with a high rate of inflation, as many people believed."

Last year the cost of living index rose by 7.3 per cent, which might be above the OECD average but also helps to be the lowest that Iceland has achieved in 20 years.

He hopes there will be "no return to the bad old ways of spending as if there was no tomorrow."

Others believe this is possible, that a 'new realism' has arrived in Iceland which has rid the country of the extreme fluctuations in economic fortune that have plagued it for much of the post-war period.

Both the International Monetary Fund, in a confidential report, and the OECD in its latest survey have expressed approval at the country's current economic policy.

Forecasters suggest Iceland should manage an average 7 per cent inflation rate this year as further evidence of the success of the present government's stabilisation programme.

Bringing greater calm to the economy has not been easy and it has cost the government much electoral popularity. Between 1987 and 1990 Iceland's gross domestic product per head fell by almost 8 per cent, compared with a 9 per cent average rise in OECD countries.

Private consumption over the same period plummeted by 13 per cent in real terms, though it rose by 1.5 per cent in 1990. Industrial investment virtually collapsed by as much as 40 per cent in real terms over the last three years.

The severity of the austerity helped to stabilise the economy. As a result, the government can point to a number of positive results on top of its relatively low inflation rate.

The trade deficit of 1987 and 1988 was transformed into a KRONA surplus in the next two years, mainly due to a huge fall in imports of 25 per cent in three years. An IKR16.6bn trade

surplus is forecast for this year. The balance of payments deficit has dropped from the equivalent of 0.5 per cent of Iceland's GDP in 1987 and 1988 to 2 per cent last year and 1.6 per cent forecast for this.

The 18-month wage and price agreement reached between employers and trade unions last February helped to contain inflationary pressures by keeping the rise in nominal earnings down to 9-10 per cent. Wages are expected to grow by slightly less than 9 per cent this year, according to the latest forecast from Iceland's National Economic Institute. It

increased subsidies and higher social security benefits. For 1991, IKR41.5bn has been allocated for transfer payments but this involves a 3.8 per cent increase, a substantial decline in real terms.

Iceland's foreign debt also remains formidably large - a burdensome reminder of past economic mismanagement. It is expected to fall from 48 per cent of GDP last year (\$27.7bn) to 46 per cent this year but the cost of servicing that debt is expected to climb in 1991 to 8.5 per cent of GDP compared with an average 7.5 per cent over the past two

to be "used to repay external debt and reduce imbalances."

Market-oriented structural reforms which have been carried out since 1987 have "put the economy in a much stronger position to adapt and diversify and to reduce the excessive volatility which characterised the past decade," says the OECD.

Mr Grimson will fight April's general election on an economic programme that calls for an increased purchasing power for the lower-paid, more structural reforms in industry, environmental improvements and, above all, maintaining economic stability. He may lead the most left-wing party in Iceland, but he also argues what the country lacks is "a modern entrepreneurial class" with skills in marketing and production methods.

"We must develop an entrepreneurial culture," he insists. Iceland faces "a real choice" this spring - between continuing to strengthen the economy's stability or returning to the roller-coaster mentality that did so much damage to the country during the 1980s. It may well be that the recovery that has taken place over the past three years is based on fragile foundations and internal and external pressures will refuel an inflationary spiral. Certainly there is a danger - if the massive Alcoa smelter project gets off the ground - of a return to an overheated economy. But the need for self-discipline, higher interest rates, a tighter fiscal policy on

public spending, and the creation of a more competitive atmosphere do appear to have more widespread support than they used to have.

Yet observers believe Iceland cannot afford to become complacent. It is too early to jump to the comforting view that the wild swings in the economy will not return in the 1990s.

As the OECD noted in its December report, "avoiding the sort of over-heating that has plagued the Icelandic economy in the past, may prove difficult."

Aluminium project runs into delays

MANY Icelanders believe the country's hopes for greater prosperity lie in the completion of the so-called Alcoa aluminium project. Meanwhile, a consortium seeks to raise funds from US banks for the \$1bn smelter.

The plant at Keilanes, 25 miles south of Reykjavik, with a capacity of 210,000 metric tons a year, could certainly have a beneficial impact on Iceland's economy. The country's independent National Economic Institute calculates it would add an extra 4 per cent both to real disposable income and the gross domestic product by 1995.

The consortium is negotiating with the Icelandic government, the country's National Power company and local authorities over the project. The three foreign-owned companies involved are Alcoa of the US, Granges, a division of Electroal, the Swedish white-goods maker and Höegh, a Dutch company.

At a meeting in New York last month, members of the group and Icelandic government officials agreed that it would probably take a further six to ten months to complete the financing arrangements, though completion of contract negotiations is planned within the next three months.

Changes in finance and banking regulations

An important step forward

ICELAND'S financial and banking system is being deregulated by stages to come into line with the European Community's internal market on January 1, 1993.

The restrictive structure dominated by government controls really began to liberalise in 1984 when the country's commercial banks were permitted to decide their own rates of interest subject to the veto of the Central Bank. This was modified still further two years later with the passage of new banking legislation.

Last September another important step forward was taken when Iceland decided to ease foreign exchange regulations on long-term capital movements. Their complete removal will have taken place by January 1, 1993.

As a result of these changes, Icelanders will be free to make direct investments abroad, buy real estate and invest in long-term foreign securities within specific maximum amounts which will disappear by January, 1993.

At the same time, Icelanders will also be able to borrow overseas for whatever reason as long as the transaction is not financed by a bank or other financial institution. The ceiling applying to the size of the amount will increase until it too is dropped on January, 1993.

"We have followed a step-by-step strategy, but the changes have been radical," argues Johannes Nordal, the Central Bank governor. "We are now operating in a quite different climate to that of ten years ago."

These developments have already begun to transform Iceland's financial system. In 1986, a securities exchange was opened with the main trading being carried out by the Central Bank with the main commercial banks and private brokers also taking part, mainly trading with government bonds.

Since 1985, there has also been the development of mutual funds whose gross assets have risen from IKR385m in that year to IKR9.78bn by the end of 1989. The tiny Iceland stock market is also going through a period of rapid expansion, helped in particular by heavy share-buying by the country's pension funds.

In its 1990 survey, the OECD wrote critically of "inadequate competition" in the country's banking system.

"Private banks are not confronted by a level playing field," it complained.

"State banks have the advantage of being able to get assistance in writing-off bad debts while their deposits carry a state guarantee. Together with the absence of foreign competition, these factors serve to reduce efficiency and increase deposit rates and spreads for the private institutions."

There has certainly been a restructuring of the Icelandic banks over the past two years. Mergers and amalgamations have been encouraged by the country's minister of commerce, Mr Jon Sigurdsson. As a result, their number was reduced from seven to 3.

The most important change was the creation of Islandsbanki which is the only major

privately-owned commercial bank in the country. This followed the coming together of the Union Bank, the Industrial Bank and the Iceland Bank of Commerce who reached an agreement with the Icelandic government to acquire the state's capital stock in the Fisheries Bank. All four of them then merged to form Islandsbanki, which came into being on 1 January 1990.

"There was no take-over but a merger of equals," insists Mr Valur Valsson, head of the new bank. Islandsbanki is keen to stress competition and quality as its guiding principles in a banking system unused to the free market.

In a further rationalisation, Landsbanki, the country's largest bank which remains under state control, took over the small Co-operative Bank.

The Central Bank is now examining - at Mr Sigurdsson's request - whether Landsbanki should be turned into a public limited company. Many observers believe it is only a question of when, and not if, Iceland's entire banking system is freed from state ownership.

For the moment, however, Landsbanki remains firmly under the state's authority.

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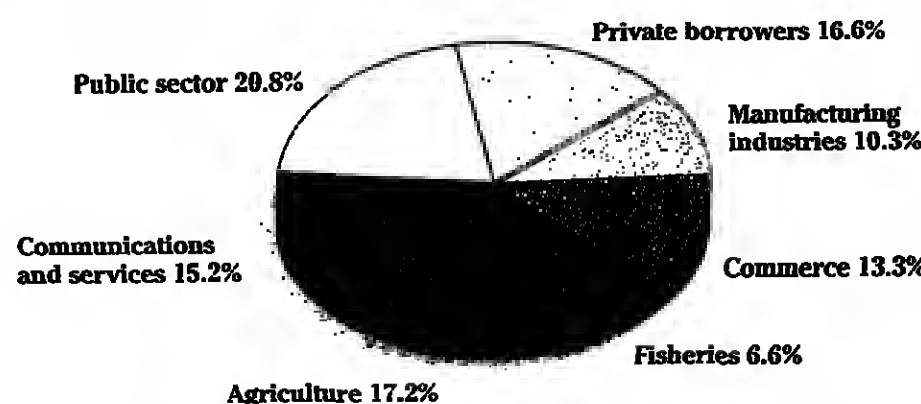
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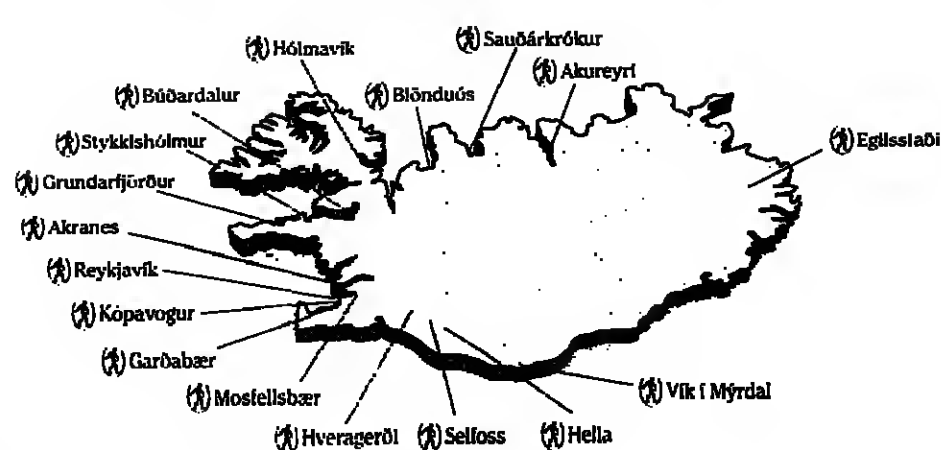
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Apples to mainland Britain

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ARTS

TELEVISION

Sitcom reaches the menopause

The Gulf war has so dominated our attention in the last few weeks that we are in danger of overlooking altogether matters which might normally have been the subject of entire columns. Time, then, to take a broader look at television's spring season and see what trends have been emerging. Consider first the sudden popularity (among programme makers, not necessarily with viewers: that is yet to be seen) of the sub-menopausal sitcom.

Time was when half-hour comedies all seemed to be about young people sharing flats, or youthful parents bringing up unruly infants. No doubt that is pretty surprising when you consider the writers and producers: their own experience ran to starting flats and bringing up unruly infants. They were members of the 1960s generation and their characters tended to lead lives which - by television's ultra-conservative standards, at any rate - were ever so slightly offbeat or daring. For instance in *Man About the House* (1973) Richard O'Sullivan's unmarried character shared a flat with two unmarried girls played by Sally Thomsett and Paula Wilcox. Wow, naughty naughty.

This season Wilcox has turned up as a middle-aged mum in *Fiddlers Three*, Yorkshire's comedy series about jealousy and neurosis in an accounts office, and O'Sullivan takes the lead role of a neurotic middle-aged psychiatrist in *LWT's Trouble in Mind*. Episode 1 was all about his terrified fight with Hell's Angels. The most admirable aspect of the work was that nobody made condescending allowances for the disabled or disadvantaged; they were simply a natural part of the action and some very powerful material travelled in both directions. "You ever seen an epileptic spastic at full throttle?" George asked mischievously, and at another time was told, with some justice in terms of the plot, "You're just like all the rest, wrapped up in yourself".

In O'Sullivan's case it is a black BMW, but the three smart limousines which swished into the hospital car park at the start of Episode 1 of *Doctor At The Top* were a Landia, a Saab and a Volvo. (Comedy writers take a bleakly honest view of the preferences of the better-off British middle classes.) The men who

emerged from those cars were Geoffrey Davies, George Layton and Robin Nedwell, the very people who played the medical students when *London Weekend* launched *Doctor In The House* 20 years ago. Now they are the grandees of the medical profession.

Television is a very young business. There are people still working in it today who began making programmes for the BBC at Alexandra Palace in the early 1950s when there was virtually no audience (David Attenborough for example). The big expansion came in the 1960s and for those of us who belong to the 'sixties generation' it is naturally pleasing to see our contemporaries continuing to do so well. Whether it is really in television's own best interests, however, that this domination should continue is another matter. Thank goodness for the youthful craziness of *Red Dwarf* where there is an admirable absence of bald patches, vasectomies and foreign limbs.

The second noticeable trend is that drama suddenly seems to become not merely acceptable but pretty well mandatory. A new series of "A Play" opened with a wonderfully heartening drama called *Deplored* by Sheila Fox in which Nabil Shaban, an actor who is genuinely confined to a wheelchair because he possesses only about two thirds of a normal body, played George, a tough, obstinate, and inspiring character who disregarded his circumstances and fought his way through with Hell's Angels.

The most admirable aspect of the work was that nobody made condescending allowances for the disabled or disadvantaged; they were simply a natural part of the action and some very powerful material travelled in both directions. "You ever seen an epileptic spastic at full throttle?" George asked mischievously, and at another time was told, with some justice in terms of the plot, "You're just like all the rest, wrapped up in yourself".

But the most touching scene was when Cherry stripped off to take George to bed, not out of charity but partly from affection and perhaps partly as



Twenty years on: George Layton, Geoffrey Davies and Robin Nedwell have risen in the medical profession in 'Doctor at the Top'

a challenge. Some viewers will have been embarrassed because some viewers always are, but it seemed to me a key scene, extraordinarily well played. George was obliged for the first time to acknowledge his own reality: "This could break my back. Cherry - I'm a virgin".

There were some eschewed funny sexual explicit lines in the next item in this series, *Itch* (more accurately *itch*) written by David Stafford and Alexei Seyle, with Seyle playing the demon hitch-hiker who was warped on a roundabout and inspired the residents of the adjoining estate to change their lives. "Has that leg peck on your scrotum melted yet?" one wife asked her husband, to which he replied "Ages ago" whereupon they resumed their intensive efforts to conceive a child.

By now regular readers of this column who remember the demands over the years for the phrase "sex-and-violence" to be broken up, on the grounds that we need more of the former and less of the latter, are probably muttering "Surely he's not complaining, he's the one who campaigned for it". But nowhere in this column has there ever been a call for violent sex, sadistic sex, or any sort of cruelty connected with television gives us.

The third work in the "A Play" series, Daniel Morin's *In The Border Country* which invented a most striking visual

technique, sometimes reminiscent of Cocteau's *Orpheus*, had some pretty routine and uninspiring bookings in it, as well as some extremely unpleasant, uninformative, and unenjoyable scenes. But the lulu of the season so far was *The Lougher Of God* on BBC2's "Screen Two" slot on Sunday. Why anybody should imagine that the vivid depiction of rape and mistress hanting has anything to do with entertainment is quite baffling. Perhaps Tony Bicat could enlighten us since he both wrote and directed this ludicrous farce.

At least the sex in *The Lougher Of God* was pretty, though a kinder cameraman would have warned Kate Buffery about the little shadows thrown by the cellulose lumps on those sturdy thighs as she strode starkers into the tropical pool. Still, it is the very presence of this latterday bodice ripper on Channel 4 which brings us to the third trend: the way in which this channel is changing into just another commercial channel with some conscience-saving minority flourishes.

The change is not so very great because even in Jeremy Isaacs' day Channel 4 screened a higher proportion of American programmes than any other channel in Britain or Europe, and ratings catchers such as the soap opera *Brookside* have been with us since the channel's opening night. But now, in addition to the soap and all

those American comedies in the early evenings (*Kate And Allie*, *The Wonder Years*, *Happy Days*) they also have the *Jonathan Ross* chat show three times a week, which is as painlessly missable as *Wogan*.

Furthermore it seems that increasingly often the centre of the evening schedule is occupied by the sort of international drama - *Orchid House* or *La Loo* - which nobody could possibly pretend was either a programme for minorities, or an attempt to "be different", which was the other famous instruction given to Channel 4. It is possible, though far from certain, that the result of these changes is a small increase in audience share: in the last three weeks their figures have been 10, 10 and 9.8 per cent - but then in the spring of 1988 they took a share of around 11 per cent for an unbroken run of six weeks.

As with menapausal sitcoms and mandatory sex in drama, this trend is difficult to "prove". But the gut feeling of a regular viewer is that Channel 4, which always was pretty soft at the edges, now has a bit more of a soft centre too. If true it is hardly surprising since the channel is soon going to lose the protection and support of the BBC, and will have to stand on its own feet, sell its own advertising, and earn its own living. It is as well to be clear about the possible implications of that change.

Christopher Dunkley

La fanciulla del West

NEW THEATRE, CARDIFF

Welsh National Opera's *Fanciulla* goes to at least part of the way to soothing memories of the last sortie to Cardiff for the company's dreadful *Count Orf*. The new *Fanciulla* is deeper, more gradually accumulated, and presented in a fine-looking production by the Romanian director Petrica Ionesco.

The show, shared with the *Opera de Nice* and first seen there, marks Ionesco's British debut. He has lived in France since 1971, and works as both producer and designer; the substantial sets for this *Fanciulla* are his, and were built in Nice. They are not exactly sumptuous, more carefully realistic: there is a sparsely furnished first act, with plenty of room for galumphing miners and even for a brief appearance by a dancing bear. Minnie's cabin is a spartan affair but still occupies the full width of the stage, and the mine for the third is dominated by its railway track and by towering brick walls.

In the outer acts Ionesco fills his acting space with plenty of bodies and a good deal of business. But he seems more convincing on the general effects than as a character-to-character level; there is no obvious attempt to define any character outside the central trio, relying on broad-brush

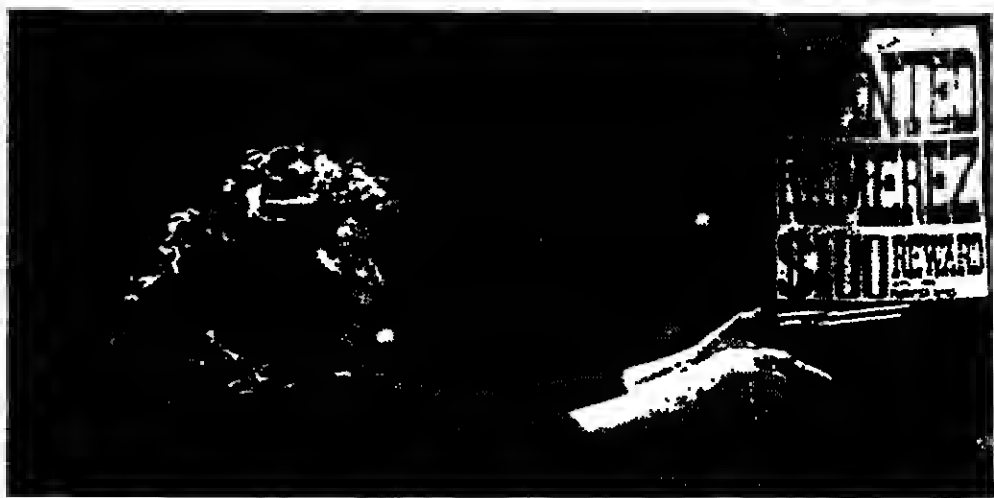
sketches with little fine detail. In the first act, especially, the action seems over-busy, lurching between stylised posturing and a more casual realism; the quickfire succession of subplots that gradually accumulate to give the opera its feeling of place and period are scarcely defined enough and it is only the steadily narrowing focus of the opera itself, one suspects, rather than any sense of the production that brings the action finally into sharper relief.

And so it is when the drama finally settles upon the central trio that the spell of this production begins to take hold, and then Julian Smith's incisive, generously-paced conducting, combined with the highly coloured (or slightly coarse) orchestral playing, pays theatrical dividends. There is a sturdy gallery of roles around the principals, not all by any means fully fleshed, but never less than acceptable: Coleman Freeman's Nick and Ashley Thorburn's Ashby are both sung with a fine sense of style. The "Red Indian" couple of Billy Jackrabbit and Wowwie are played (well) as standard caricatures by Peter Massocchi and Valerie Seymour - curious that white-liberal sensibilities are not outraged by such cartoon treatment of native

Americans, when a similar portrayal of black characters would be considered unacceptable; David Barrell contributes a hind Jake Wallace, the travelling minstrel, who is brought back at the final curtain to give the production its last image.

Dennis O'Neill's Dick Johnson sounds first rate and attains a real heroic attack in the final act; his is genuine Puccini singing of a superior standard. But he looks, well, a little unlikely as the charismatic hero of the piece, and much of the time acts awkwardly as if he knows that. Donald Maxwell's Rance is brutal, physical, and once he had overcome the stylisation of the first act, genuinely menacing, with a well-focused, never rasping delivery; the violence is never far from the surface. And Suzanne Murphy is a genuinely convincing, moving and often thrilling Minnie, getting the mixture of toughness and vulnerability just right, and singing with freedom and easy control. It is one of the virtues of this straightforward staging that she and the other protagonists are given the dramatic space in which to build and doubtless to develop further their performances.

Andrew Clements



Suzanne Murphy: a thrilling Minnie

Heaven

LILIAN BAYLIS THEATRE, N1

There is irony in the fact that London's most famous gay club is located in the arches beneath Charing Cross Station, and that people in search of bliss go there through an area long known for its homeless occupants. There is another irony in the fact that this club is called Heaven.

This double irony is the premise of this new play, *Heaven*, and exciting first play. The title *Heaven* acquires perhaps a triple irony from the fact that its author, Sarah Acker, was a victim of the Lockerbie air crash. She completed it in 1988 and was writing a second play at the time of her death.

It is not a perfect work; there are some unnecessary loose ends. But it is absorbing, both tough and compassionate. Contrasts abound. Act One is centred around the contrast between two pairs of men - Billy and Johnny, tramp and He, the tramp, is the play's most chivalrous and complex character; Sam Dale plays him with fine intensity. The force of Act Two is largely based on the fierce dialectic between Johnny, ruler of the underworld, and Steven; and Jeff Harding is gripping as he makes Johnny's bitter, cruel pride more and more comprehensible. And, alas, more

destructive. Crispin Redman portrays Steven's torment simply, directly, affecting. Robert Blythe is well cast as Blair, physically the most attractive character, morally its most repellent. The tramps confuse their thoughts of love and home with thoughts of religion - paradise lost - and in particular of the Virgin Mary. The play's ironies are never more stirring than in these connections between homelessness and the psychopathology of religion.

The most haunting and disturbing performance is given by Oscar, the underling and pivotal role of another homeless man, the play's oldest character, Jack. In Act Two he is locked into his own mental retreat, and the look on his face is like one of Rembrandt's or Caravaggio's paintings of old people.

The image I cannot shake off is of him, seated in Heaven, seated in profile to us as if in prayer, gazing transfixed up at the wall-capturing of Marilyn Monroe, gazing as if asking for her to intercede. Again and again, a switch passes through one hand, as if he were plucking it a rosary.

Alastair Macaulay

Czech music: Jirák and Zámečník

PRAGUE

What with the bicentenary of Mozart's death and the centenary of Prokofiev's birth, there isn't much room this year for other anniversaries - except in Czechoslovakia. Prague is busy celebrating the Dvořák 150th anniversary, and has also found time for Karel Boleslav Jirák (1891-1972), whose *Philharmonic Variations* opened a concert by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra last month.

Although Jirák spent the last 25 years of his life at the Boesewick College in Chicago, his name is little known outside Czechoslovakia. After starting out as a conductor, he made his name as head of music at Czechoslovak Radio from 1930 to 1945. Like Martinu, whose path he hardly crossed despite superficial similarities in their careers, Jirák falls between the late Romanticism and the 20th-century avant-garde. In his day, his music was admired for its intellectual rigour, but its stiffness - a lack of spontaneity and improvisation - denied it widespread appeal. As an endgame he was out of favour with the Communists, and his output has still not been properly catalogued.

Like the *Philharmonic Variations* (1940) immensely. The theme with

which the violins open the work is a sunny, suave, laid-back tune, and a perfect vehicle for development. Jirák disguises and transforms it with impeccable taste and lively invention, handing over one set of variations to concertante violin and horn, presenting another as a fugue, yet another as a march. Jirák turns out to be an expert orchestrator, but there is nothing academic about his treatment. The textures are clear, more Romantic than Martinu, and some harmonies are rather languid. One detects a central European Vaughan Williams. Only in the final paragraphs - which blaze to a quick conclusion - are there signs of the Czech bite one had been expecting all along.

This performance in the Smetana Hall, conducted by Tadeusz Strugała from Poland, was followed by an equally well-argued account of Mozart's Symphony No. 40 and *Harold in Italy* with Wolfram Christ. Perhaps Libor Pešek - who has already introduced the music of Jirák's teacher, Vítěslav Novák, to audiences in Liverpool - might now also consider programming Jirák?

Under the Communists, state-supported

culture in Czechoslovakia spawned literally hundreds of operas, most of which will never again see the light of day. Having sampled a good few of them, I am not about to spring to their defence. In 40 years' time, a few might filter through - and children's operas stand as good a chance as any. This was a genre which the machine of state culture could afford generously to support. To my knowledge, no-one used the medium to write code messages for the party, but the genre brought to fore some talents that would not otherwise have been recognised - such as Evžen Zámečník (b.1939). *Brodek Pytlík* ("Brook the Beetle"), one of several children's operas he has written, is currently proving popular in Prague.

Zámečník comes from Brno and studied in Munich with Gunter Blasis. In the 1970s he worked as a violinist in the Brno orchestras. *Brodek Pytlík* is based on a popular children's picture-book of the 1830s by Rudolf Zak - Jiri Pauer has written a ballet on the same theme. All the characters are insects, so there is plenty of scope for imaginative costuming. *Brodek* is a well-meaning but bumbling Bunter-like figure, who keeps getting into a fix and blotting his copy-book with other members

of the insect kingdom. Of course, he immediately wins the affection of a children's audience. Zámečník is well aware of the educational opportunity at his disposal. After introducing himself et curtain-up, *Brodek* merrily drills a chorus of junior insects in the importance of rhythm and intonation. Each of the orchestra sections is given a chance to make its presence and role clearly identifiable. There is a delicious, dreamy waltz, plenty of punchy ostinatos and a serene rondo for two sopranos that is Ravellian in its touching simplicity. The music is light but never trivial.

Children's opera is something the National Theatre's ageing roster of artists - so lacklustre in other activities at present - does rather well, and *Brodek Pytlík* has something for nearly everyone. This production at the Smetana Theatre, staged by Miloslav Nekvasil and conducted by Jan Stych, included a cameo by Helena Tattermuschová (one of Prague's best postwar voices) as a spider and a strong support of young talent. The opera would travel well.

Andrew Clark

INTERNATIONAL ARTS GUIDE TODAY'S EVENTS

AMSTERDAM

Concertgebouw Grote Zaal 20.15 Anton Kerekes conducts Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra in Wagner's overture *Amphitruon* and Franck's Symphony in D, with Emmy Verhey soloist in Bruch's Violin Concerto. Fri: Janos Furst conducts Gade's Nielsen with Hague Residentie Orchestra. Sat at 15.00: Rotterdam Philharmonic plays Messiaen's Turangalila Symphony. Sat at 20.15 and Sun at 14.15: Wolfgang Sawallisch conducts Concertgebouw Orchestra, with Murray Perahia (6718 345). Concertgebouw Kleine Zaal 20.15 Orlando Quartet plays string quartets by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. Fri Mitsuko Shirai and Udo Reinmann sing Wolf's *Woyzeck* Lied, accompanied by Hartmut Hoff (6718 345). Stadsschouwburg 20.15 Netherlands Theatre in ballets by Hans van Manen, Paul Lightfoot and Paulo Ribeiro, also tomorrow (6242 311).

BERLIN

Staatstheater unter den Linden 19.00

Siegfried Kurz conducts Der Freischütz, with Reiner Goldberg as Max. Tomorrow: Die Fledermaus. Sat: Die Zauberflöte. Sun: Parsifal (2004 762). Deutsche Oper 19.30 Madame Butterfly with Yoko Watanabe in the title role. Fri: Irvanatore. Sat: Tosca (3410 249). Berliner Ensemble 19.00 Galileo Galilei. Fri: Baal. Sun: Mother Courage (2227 712). Schauspielhaus 19.30 Luc Bondy's production of *The Winter's Tale*, also tomorrow and Fri (890023).

COLOGNE

Philharmonie 20.00 Cleveland Quartet gives European premiere of Stephen Paulus' First Quartet, and is joined by Sabine Meyer for Brahms' Clarinet Quintet (2801). Schauspielhaus 9.30 Brendan Behan's play *The Hostage*, also (221 340). Kammeroper 20.00 Brecht's *In the Jungle of Cities*, also Fri and Sat (221 8400).

GENEVA

Victoria Hall 20.30 Armin Jordan conducts Orchestra de la Suisse Romande in Schubert's Great Cello and Symphony and Dutilleul's Cello Concerto with Francois Guye. Sun: Paul-Louis Siron conducts Handel's oratorio *Jephtha* (292511).

MADRID

Auditorio Nacional de Musica Sala Sinfonica 19.30 Saulius Sondeckis conducts Chamber Orchestra of Lithuania, with Cristina Bruno piano soloist, also tomorrow. Fri, Sat and Sun: Aldo Ceccato conducts Spanish National

Orchestra (337 0100). Auditorio de la Musica Sala de Camara 19.30 Borodin Quartet, also tomorrow (337 0100).

MUNICH

Staatstheater 19.30 Cinderella, choreographed by Riccardo Duse, music by Prokofiev. Sat: Sun: Giselle, choreographed by Peter Wright (221316). Philharmonie 20.00 Herbert Beissel conducts Klassische Philharmonie Bonn in music by Cherubini, Mozart and Haydn. Tomorrow and Fri: Neville Marriner conducts Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (48098 614).

LONDON

DANCE Covent Garden 19.00 Last performance this season of Natalia Makarova's production of *La Bayadere*, with Lesley Collier (240 1066). MUSIC Coliseum 19.30 Monte Jaffe sings the title role in Arribert Reimann's *Lea*, conducted by Paul Daniel. Tomorrow and Sat: The Turn of the Screw. Fri: Russek (836 3161). Royal Festival Hall 19.30 Norman Dal Mar conducts Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in music by Brahms and Sibelius. Tomorrow and Sun: Giulini conducts the Philharmonie (928 8800). Queen Elizabeth Hall 19.00 Peter Robinson conducts David Freeman's Opera Factory production of *La nozze di Figaro*, sung in English (828 8800).

THEATRE

This week's shows include Peter Hall's production of Shakespeare's

Twelfth Night (Playhouse), Silly Cow, Ben Elton's new play about a gossip columnist (Haymarket), Steve Berkoff's adaptation of *Kafka's The Trial* with a cast led by Anthony Sher (National), Joe Orton's classic black comedy *What the Butler Saw* (Wyndham's) and Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest musical *Aspects of Love* (Princes).

MILAN

Teatro alla Scala 20.00 Lorin Maazel conducts Jonathan Miller's production of *La Fanciulla del West*, with Mary Jane Johnson as Minnie and Giorgio Lamberti as Dick Johnson. Also Fri and Sun (7200 3744).

NEW YORK

MUSIC Metropolitan Opera 19.30 Jiri Kout conducts Der Rosenkavalier, with Mechthild Gessendörfer as the Marschallin, Tebana Troyanos as Octavian and Aege Heugland as Ochs. Tomorrow: Katya Kabanova. Fri: *La nozze di Figaro* (362 6000). Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center 20.00 Julliard Quartet with Michael Tree, viola, play Mozart quartets and quintets (874 2424).

DANCE

New York State Theater 20.00 Jeffrey Ballet: *Dieghiev* programme. Season runs till March 17 (870 5570).

THEATRE

This week's shows include Henry IV Parts 1 and 2 directed by JoAnne Akalaitis (Public), the

show (Neil Simon), *Mule Bone*, a play with music, written in 1930 during the Harlem Renaissance, with a cast representing the cream of black theatre over the past 20 years (Ethel Barrymore), and *Lerry Gelbart's City of Angels*, musical satire about Hollywood in the 1940s (Virginia). Ticketron (246 0102) answers inquiries and sells tickets.

PARIS

Palais Garnier 19.30 Netherlands Dens Theater in *Keguzhime*, ballet by Jiri Kylian with music by Mekhlil, also tomorrow at 14.30, plus Fri, Sat and Sun at 19.30. Tomorrow at 20.30: Christopher Hogwood conducts Academy of Ancient Music (4742 5371). Opéra Comique 20.00 Paris Opéra Ballet in Coppélia and *Le Divertissement No 15*. The decor and costumes for Coppélia have been modelled on the designs for the work's creation in 1870 in Paris. This programme runs till next Wed, except Mon (4286 8883).

STOCKHOLM

Konsertus 19.30 Okko Kamu conducts Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra in a programme of Berlioz, Stravinsky and Maros. Repeated on Friday in the Berwald Hall. Sat: Okko Kamu conducts popular orchestra programme (244130).

STRASBOURG

Palais des Congres 18.30 Spiros Argiris conducts Parsifal with Warren Ellisworth in title role and Matthias Hölla as Gurnemanz. Also Sat (8837 6777).

Théâtre Municipal 20.00 Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* sung by Anne-Marie Bizant, plus Manuel Rosenthal's *La Poulx Noire*, also Fri and Sun (8875 4823).

UTRECHT

Vredenburg Grote Zaal 20.15 Frans Bruggen conducts Netherlands Baroque Orchestra in music by Bach, Muffat and Delalande. Tomorrow: Rotterdam Philharmonic plays Messiaen's Turangalila Symphony (314544). Vredenburg Kleine Zaal 20.15 Sharon Quartet plays string quartets by Haydn. Fri: Orlando Quartet plays Mozart (314544).

VIENNA

Staatstheater 19.00 Peter Scheuhaus stars in his production of *La Sylphide*. Tomorrow: Giuseppe Taddei sings Falstaff (51444 2960). Musikverein 19.30 Dirk Joeres conducts Westdeutsche Sinfonie in music by Varisek, Haydn and Schubert. Fri: Václav Neumann conducts Czech programme with Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra (505 8190). Konzerthaus 19.30 Piano recital by Ingeborg Baldaszti. Sun: Alfred Brendel plays Mozart piano concertos with Camerata Academica conducted by Sandor Vegh (7124 6860).

ZURICH

Opernhaus 19.30 La Sylphide choreographed by Peter Schaufuss (251 0809). Kongresshaus 20.00 Vanessa, Lynn and Jemma Redgrave in London West End production of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. (221 2283).

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(all times CET)

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CNN 0800-0930 Moneyline

0900-0930 Moneyline

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1540-1610 Moneyweek

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Telecoms in a freer market

TELECOMMUNICATIONS is an industry which is still struggling to escape the shackles of its past. Accelerating technological change is creating new opportunities for growth and undermining both the economic and the practical basis for the monopoly provision of services. However, simply declaring open season for all-comers is not enough to ensure real competition. Over the decades, telecommunications monopolies have built up powerful entrenched positions, which enable them to suppress new entrants and distort the market. Hence, the long-term goal of a completely free market - if it is achievable at all - can only be reached by the application of firm regulation.

The British government has rightly recognised this paradox in its White Paper on the future of telecommunications policy. Though formally a review of the duopoly shared since the early 1980s by British Telecom and Mercury, the paper's main concern is to curb the monopoly power of BT, which still supplies more than 90 per cent of UK telecommunications services.

On most of the big issues, the paper hits the right target. The duopoly over fixed telephone links is to be replaced by an open licensing policy which will enable any British or foreign company to enter the market. If US experience of total liberalisation is any guide, this will benefit customers by promoting wider choice and lower tariffs for many services. Initially, at least, most new entrants will compete for market niches and will not route much of their traffic through BT's network. Since BT can hardly be expected to co-operate spontaneously, the government sensibly plans to require it to give its customers equal access to all rival long-distance services and to provide standard terms for network interconnection.

Price capping

The clearest sign that lowering entry barriers is not enough to protect customers' interest is the government's decision to continue and toughen regulation of BT's tariffs. The price capping mechanism will be extended to cover

international services, for which BT has agreed under official pressure to cut prices by 10 per cent. So long as international services remain a *de facto* cartel worldwide, there is clearly a case for price controls. However, in this case - unlike the provision of local telephone services - there is ample scope for more competition. It is disappointing that the government has not dispensed stronger determination to set the market free by hastening the demise of the cartel.

Tariff 're-balancing'

From the perspective of BT's shareholders, the review may seem unduly harsh. However, the new price control mechanism goes some way to meeting the company's demands to be allowed to "re-balance" tariffs, and their freedom will be increased from 1993. Less easy to justify is the continued ban on BT providing cable television on its network.

The main effect is to deny BT's customers the efficiencies which could be achieved by combining telephony and television on one network. The biggest criticism of the government's new policy is that it has not done more to require transparency about BT's financial structure. It has been too easy for BT to use commercial confidentiality as a reason for withholding information of legitimate public interest. That may be an argument for companies operating in normal competitive markets. But it sits awkwardly with BT's monopoly position. Customers need to be able to see for themselves that they are not being overcharged, and competitors to be sure that BT is not unfairly cross-subsidising its services.

The Office of Telecommunications has also refused to equalise access to all rival long-distance services and to provide standard terms for network interconnection. But though OfTel has performed a creditable job so far, lack of public transparency makes it harder to demonstrate its independence. Avoiding this pitfall is the more important role conferred on the agency by this new policy. OfTel and ministers should recognise that regulators need to be accountable too.

Midland tries again

SO MIDLAND Bank has a new chairman-elect and a new business plan. The next few years will show "a radical improvement", it is claimed. But we have heard before that, five years ago, the Bank of England installed its then deputy governor, Sir Kit McMahon, as chairman and chief executive in order to lead the troubled Midland to secure recovery. Instead, the bank has swung from one crisis to another.

The failure of Sir Kit's strategy has derived directly from the collapse of the plan for a merger with Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. But the lesson is not just that a misadventure in banking was adopted, but that while interference by banking regulators may reduce systemic risk to the banking system, it is liable to involve high costs for shareholders. There were obvious political attractions for the Bank of England in creating a new international British bank. But commercial forces, if they had been allowed freer rein, would probably have thrown up a different solution. If Midland had been a food manufacturer or a ladies' fashion chain, it would have remained unlikely to have remained independent over the past five years. But it is a bank, and as such has been able to rely upon the protection of a regulator. Potential predators have been frightened away, perhaps not all of them quite so outrageous as Saatchi & Saatchi. There has been much criticism of the takeover mechanism as a cure for management failings in Britain, but Midland Bank provides a case study of what happens when management is released from that ultimate threat there has been a steady decline, and a failure to take hard decisions, so that only now is it making a serious attack on its cost base.

Takeover unlikely

The Bank of England's cocoon does not entirely exclude a takeover of Midland, at least by an EC-domiciled bank, but it does not look a likely solution at present. If one of the other domestic clearing banks were to make a move, its aim would essentially be to shut Midland down. That

would not only be distressing as a management proposition, but the benefits would be enjoyed by the other banks as well as the bidder. The five years before the takeover of Midland should remain in existence as a weak competitor. Potential foreign bidders in Japan, the US and Germany are all absorbed with local problems and opportunities.

Establishment solution

The natural commercial bidder for Midland would be a non-bank, one capable of taking drastic corrective action. But the lesson is not just that a misadventure in banking was adopted, but that while interference by banking regulators may reduce systemic risk to the banking system, it is liable to involve high costs for shareholders. There were obvious political attractions for the Bank of England in creating a new international British bank. But commercial forces, if they had been allowed freer rein, would probably have thrown up a different solution. If Midland had been a food manufacturer or a ladies' fashion chain, it would have remained unlikely to have remained independent over the past five years. But it is a bank, and as such has been able to rely upon the protection of a regulator. Potential predators have been frightened away, perhaps not all of them quite so outrageous as Saatchi & Saatchi. There has been much criticism of the takeover mechanism as a cure for management failings in Britain, but Midland Bank provides a case study of what happens when management is released from that ultimate threat there has been a steady decline, and a failure to take hard decisions, so that only now is it making a serious attack on its cost base.

Shareholders' response may be crucial. It is essentially they who have borne the costs of past failures. It is true that anybody who buys shares in a bank must accept the constraints that result from statutory regulation. Yet the Bank of England has powerful supervisory tools at its disposal: it can veto individuals, it imposes stringent capital requirements and it receives a voluminous stream of information about the risks being undertaken. The public also receives a degree of protection from the deposit insurance scheme. Given all this, the question is whether the Bank needs to do more as well as a belt and interfere so much in the ownership of major banking institutions, shutting out important elements of the normal rough-and-tumble of the commercial world.

As they look at Midland's shrunken balance sheet and its halved dividend, shareholders may wonder whether the cost of modern banking regulation is being fairly apportioned.

Midland Bank yesterday lived up to its rare ability to send shock waves to the furthest reaches of the UK banking industry. The combination of the first UK clearing bank dividend cut in 50 years and the replacement of the chairman by two outsiders - one of them from a rival bank - was heady stuff even for a time when bank losses have been packing the headlines.

For Midland, the UK's chronically troubled clearer, this will be its third attempted fresh start in 10 years. And if it fails it may well be its last. The City of London's banking climate is now fiercely unforgiving, and it is no surprise that the Bank of England was closely involved in bringing about yesterday's developments.

Sir Peter Walters, the former BP chairman who takes over in June, and Mr Brian Pearse, the finance director of Barclays who moves in promptly as chief executive on Friday, have an enormous task ahead of them. Midland is much the weakest of Britain's Big Four; its staff are deeply demoralised by the seemingly endless stream of bad news, and the recession is corroding the bank's very foundations. Last month, the share price hit a record low.

"A lot of things have gone right, but a lot of things have gone wrong," said Sir Kit McMahon, the bank's outgoing chief executive and chairman, in what seems an understatement of his bank's turbulent recent past.

It is a history that encompasses the disastrous acquisition of the US-based Crocker National Bank in the early 1980s which was supposed to launch Midland onto the international scene but collapsed with humiliating losses; the abortive engagement with the Hongkong Bank which was called off in December; and now a top level restructuring.

To these should be added other self-inflicted wounds which debilitated what was once, in the 1980s, the largest bank in the world: a £25bn portfolio of loans to the Third World, a badly mismatched treasury book which cost Midland up to £250m before the positions close this year, and a tardy attempt to correct the bank's high cost structure.

The fact that Sir Kit is leaving a year ahead of time suggests that his board thinks that a new team is the bank's best hope. His own five-year stint that started when he left the deputy governorship of the Bank of England to take the job. In three of those years, shareholders took a loss.

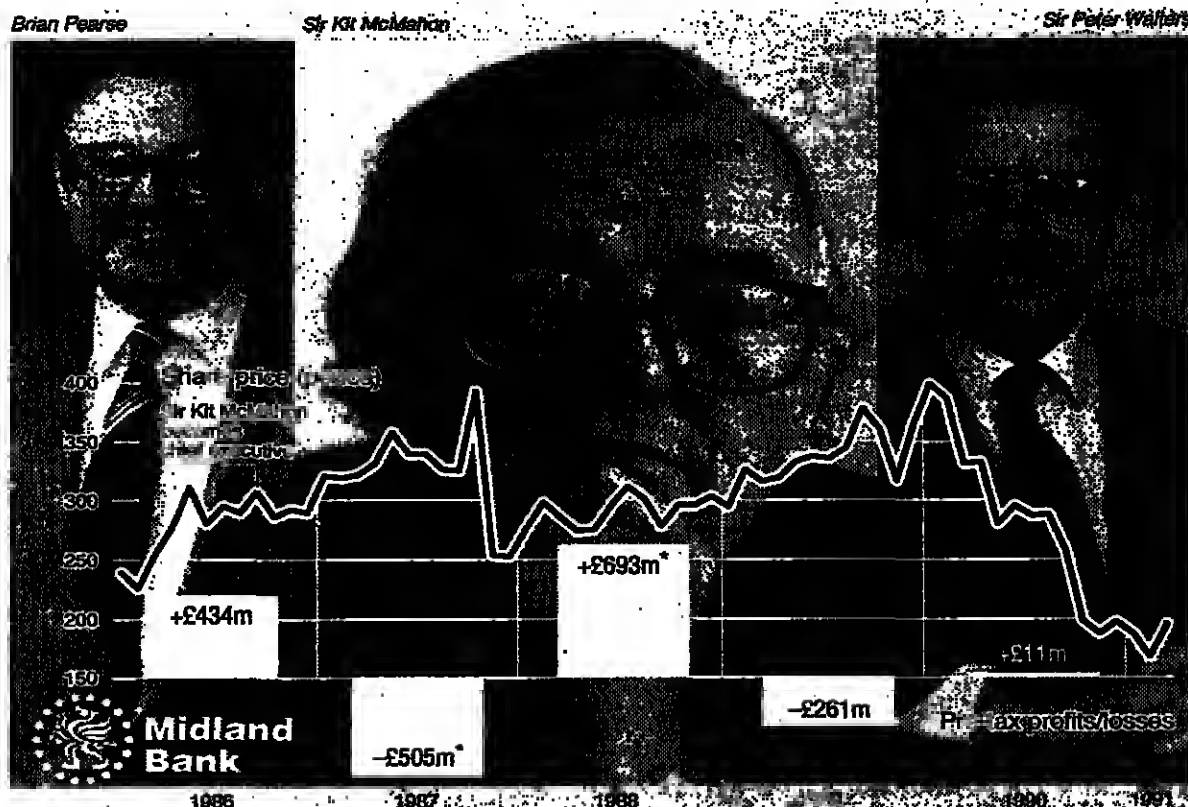
Analysts have blamed his lack of managerial experience. But had luck intervened, the recession in the UK and elsewhere put paid to the Hongkong plans, and all but pushed the bank into the red last year.

Yesterday, Sir Kit analysed Midland's fundamental problems with his customary frankness. It had failed to diversify its earnings to build up its capital, he said, and its cost structure was too high. He hoped that the foundation had now been laid for progress on both those fronts, but the fact that his farewell set of results included the historic dividend cut must have been a bitter personal disappointment.

Sir Kit's original plan had been to build his own succession into the merger plan with the Hongkong Bank. The combined role of chairman and chief executive was plainly too much for one man and would have to be split up. Instead, he enlisted the good offices of Mr Robin Leigh-Pemberton, the Bank's governor, to negotiate directly with Sir John Quinlan, Barclays' chairman. The approach caused deep shock at Barclays, and particularly Sir John, who was expected to be his former colleague at the Bank of England, and they identified Sir Peter Walters as a likely candidate. Sir Peter had previously been a member of the board of the National Westminster Bank, and a potential chairman

As the chairman of Midland Bank is replaced, David Lascelles reports on the continuing saga of woe at the UK clearer

Outsiders to the rescue — again



* Dividends from 1986 onwards have been cut by 100 per cent to 10 pence per share.

there as well. He agreed to accept the Midland post.

The task of finding a chief executive was much more delicate since Sir Kit plainly did not think that any of his lieutenants were up to the job. Instead, he turned to the Bank's prompting - he focused on Mr Pearse as a man who fulfilled the requirement for a thoroughly experienced clearing banker with proven management skills.

But there is a powerful taboo on

For Midland, the UK's chronically troubled clearer, this will be its third attempted fresh start in 10 years. And if it fails it may well be its last

"poaching" among the upper echelons of the clearing banks, and Sir Kit fell unable to recruit Mr Pearse directly. Instead, he enlisted the good offices of Mr Robin Leigh-Pemberton, the Bank's governor, to negotiate directly with Sir John Quinlan, Barclays' chairman. The approach caused deep shock at Barclays, and particularly Sir John, who was expected to be his former colleague at the Bank of England, and they identified Sir Peter Walters as a likely candidate. Sir Peter had previously been a member of the board of the National Westminster Bank, and a potential chairman

reflection of the way the City operates at times of stress. However it is also indicative of the way things have changed. In previous times strong banks were asked to take troubled banks under their wing. Now, in more competitive times, when bank mergers are less well favoured, strong banks are asked to transplant their management skills.

The most striking point about Mr Pearse's arrival at Midland is that it still leaves at only two the number of top Midland executives with a clearing bank background.

The other is Mr Brian Goldthorpe - like Mr Pearse from the north of England - the deputy group chief executive, and a hardened trouble-shooter with more than 40 years in the bank. The remaining top team were all long in place by Sir Kit and are still relatively young: Mr George London, the Dutchman who heads Midland Montagu, the institutional banking side; Mr Richard Debridge, the finance director recruited from Morgan Guaranty; and Mr Gene Lockhart, a former US management consultant who runs UK banking.

Mr Pearse's task will be to re-institute some clearing bank culture into the top management, a task for which he is well suited after a wide-ranging 40-year career at Barclays, most recently spent managing the bank's balance sheet. Along with his experience, the 57-year-old Mr Pearse brings an outgoing personality and a high degree of dynamism, both of which will be essential qualities.

Not surprisingly, the decision to go outside came as a painful blow to Sir

Kit's colleagues, and it is believed that the Bank of England had to soothe bruised egos at Midland in order to win acceptance for the appointment there. All of the top management pledged their support publicly to the new appointees yesterday. But Mr Pearse will have to work to secure their personal loyalty. "I shall have to be careful," he said. "There are young executives of considerable ambition there."

Further down the bank, the

The bank has proved a graveyard for several distinguished careers. Many in the City yesterday described Sir Peter and Mr Pearse as brave men

appointment is likely to go down much better. The bank's rank and file had felt alienated by the top layer of management which was not only failing to solve the bank's problems, but also did not belong to the clearing bank culture. "Brian Pearse looks like one of us," said one staff member yesterday.

Mr Pearse was unwilling to discuss his plans for the bank yesterday, but the agenda is clear enough. Sir Peter and he will have to capitalise on the sense of new beginning which yesterday's announcements were intended to generate. Staff will need to be

remotivated, and a clear strategy enunciated. Both men can be expected to devote a lot of time to touring the branches and rallying the troops. For in public terms, it is the bank's balance sheet and its profit and loss account that need the most urgent attention. Mr Lockhart has already made a start on bringing the group's costs down through a combination of much tightened controls and staff lay-offs (4,000 jobs are going).

A long-planned centralised processing system for cutting the cost of cheque handling is also being phased in. At the end of last year it was already handling three quarters of Midland's cheques; by the end of this year it is handling nearly all of them. Midland believes this system will make it a market leader in UK banking. But there is still a long way to go. Midland's ratio of costs to income last year was 78.3 per cent, compared to 65.7 per cent at Barclays and only 44.4 per cent in public National.

At the same time, tighter central controls have been imposed on credit to minimise bad debts. The Third World portfolio has been reduced by £1.5bn through a programme of asset sales. On the deposit side there is a drive to win a greater share of the market and reduce funding costs.

A series of disposals of non-essential businesses is also under way. On Monday, Midland announced the sale of its French mortgage subsidiary, the Woodwich building society. And there have been persistent rumours of larger sell-offs in the pipeline.

It is only by generating more profits that Midland will be able to accumulate the capital it needs to strengthen its balance sheet. But with total assets shrinking by 5 per cent last year, Midland may also have to accept a smaller and more specialised role in the market. It has already been forced to withdraw from many overseas markets.

In the UK, it has the traditional strengths of a clearer with a large branch network in the country's high streets, and this will obviously form the core of the group. The question will be how many of Midland's other activities will rate as "core" businesses.

Midland Montagu, which handles institutional and international banking, has been rumoured as a possible divestment. Last year it bore the brunt of the City's criticism over its capital markets operations and Samuel Montagu, its merchant banking arm, both performed reasonably well given market conditions. Other important subsidiaries include Thomas Cook travel and Forward Trust leasing. Midland failed to find a buyer for Forward Trust last year, but both of these might also be offered for sale.

Midland would be vulnerable to a complete takeover in its current condition, but for the fact that there are at present no obvious bidders in the market. None of its peer group of UK clearing banks wants to assume the cost and responsibility of Midland's business, and few foreign banks are currently in a position to bid, even if the Bank of England were to give its assent.

This will give Sir Peter and Mr Pearse a much-needed breathing space to turn Midland round. They will be able to draw encouragement from the fact that a start has been made on the bank's most intractable problems: costs are falling, the Third World debt burden is lightening and the treasury book mismatch has been hedged. There is also a prospect for further falls in UK interest rates.

But Midland has proved a graveyard for many distinguished careers, and there is a real danger that the bank's fortunes would expose it to the predators who are certain to emerge once conditions improve. There were plenty of people in the City yesterday who described Sir Peter and Mr Pearse as brave men.

The real surprise

■ The real surprise in the Midland Bank boardroom is not the importing of Sir Peter Walters as non-executive chairman. It's that the group has had to recruit a senior clearing banker from arch-enemy, Barclays.

Brian Pearse is not even being asked to observe the usual quarantine period. At 57, he joins Midland with immediate effect, carrying with him all Barclays' strategic secrets. There could be no better indicator of the severity of the problems he faces.

Midland Bank has stood out from its peers in being a heavy recruiter of top outside talent. Of the five most senior executives, only Brian Goldthorpe, the deputy chief executive who started with the bank in 1949, has been on its payroll more than five years. But until now Midland Bank's problem was not seen to be a shortage of traditional clearing bankers.

Aside from the deputy chief, the other obvious candidate for the topmost job was Gene Lockhart, the 41-year-old technology wizard. However, while Goldthorpe was considered too pedestrian, Lockhart was deemed too exciting.

As for external candidates, it would be surprising if a banker like Bruce Patullo, Bank of Scotland's 53-year-old chief executive, had not been considered. Lloyds Bank's Brian Pitman would have been another obvious quarry. But he would probably have insisted on Lloyds taking over Midland, which would have caused all sorts of monopolies and mergers commission problems.

With only two years left at Barclays, Pearse has little to lose by the move, except his reputation. An ex-Martins Bank man, he is one of the many Barclays footsolders who have marched alongside the various members of its founding families, always knowing they were unlikely

OBSERVER

to get a chance at the top job. He first made his name in UK retail banking, then helped to save Barclays from losing its shirt in the US, and most recently he has been in charge of the balance sheet. His great asset is his ability to motivate staff, which at the moment is Midland's prime need.

Finding a chair

■ Although Sir Peter Walters' appointment to the Midland Bank chair is less of a surprise, it does raise the issue of why a candidate could not have been found from within the existing board.

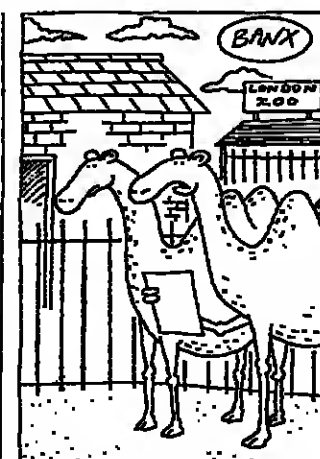
After all Midland has more than its fair share of respectable industrial heavyweights. The fact that Sir Peter apparently did not see eye to eye with some of his other directors at National Westminster Bank, when he was being considered for the chairmanship of that institution in 1989, suggests Midland's board was either very brave or under pressure from elsewhere.

Sir Peter's record as a manager at BP is impressive. He captained the UK's largest oil company through a period of turbulent change and yet knows how to delegate. Since missing out on the chairmanship of NatWest he has been in need of an important job.

Traditionally, Midland has always had a non-executive chairman. Sir Peter now has to show he is cast in the same mould as predecessors like Reginald McKenna, Viscount Monckton and Sir Archibald Forbes and once again make Midland a great British bank.

Early days

■ The publicity surrounding Sir Kit McMahon's years as chairman has tended to obscure his previous 21-year



"We got the contract to repopulate the desert."

incarnation as a central banker.

Clever, popular and unstuffy, he was recruited into the Bank of England as an adviser in 1964, when the Old Lady was desperately trying to beef up her economics capabilities after criticism from the Radcliffe committee. He rose rapidly to become an executive director in 1970, and deputy governor to Gordon Richardson 10 years later. But he remained something of an outsider, and ultimately the governorship passed him by.

It was as deputy that he enjoyed the most dramatic moment of his career. It came when - with chief cashier David Somerset and a partner from the Bank's solicitors Freshfields - McMahon went to Algiers during the hostage crisis to release the American hostages in January 1981. The Bank was appointed escort agent holding the funds against the transfer of which to Iran the hostages were released.

He was said to have relished this episode. But a less happy incident was the Johnson

Matthew affair when the Bank's handling of the matter caused grave disquiet in the City. He weathered that storm, although not without later criticism that he had distanced himself from it perhaps too much.

His appointment to the Midland met with general approval in Threadneedle Street. "We felt that if anyone could clear up the mess, Kit could," recalls one of his former colleagues.

Ex-gamekeepers

■ Merchant bankers may make good central bankers - but do central bankers make good commercial bankers?

The question is inevitably raised by the Sir Kit McMahon's departure. Like Rodney Gelpin over at Standard Chartered, he was parachuted in by the Bank of England to take charge of an institution which would be on the Bank's worry list, if it ever admitted having one.

There is a mystique about central bankers - a belief that they know how to sort out problems which baffle others. So the appointments were not regarded as particularly unusual at the time. The Old Lady knew best, it seemed.

Nevertheless, there is no necessary reason why a central banker should be better than anybody else at running a big clearing bank. A central bank is a mixture of academic institution, nationalised industry and official regulator. Keeping an eye on the bottom line is not a prime item in a central banker's training.

True, Robin Leigh-Pemberton, was a good chairman of National Westminster Bank, and has by most accounts acquitted himself well as Governor of the Bank of England. Sir Jeremy Morse, a former executive director of the Bank, has been an excellent chairman of Lloyds Bank. But then he has been assisted by a strong and able chief executive.

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Mr Jacques Lesourne is an example of a breed as rare in France as it is elsewhere: the business philosopher. He will need every ounce of his business sense and his philosophy, if he is to succeed in his new job as boss of Le Monde, France's most distinguished daily newspaper.

Mr Lesourne, a distinguished economist and former computer software consultant who two months ago became the non-journalist to head Le Monde, is just beginning to make his mark on this troubled and loss-making institution. His arrival marks the end of a serious leadership crisis at the newspaper. His mission: to sharpen up the business practices of a paper that has traditionally been run like a cross between a workers' co-operative and an Oxford college, while at the same time nurturing its special culture.

He is not without illusions about the enormity of the task. Redundancies must be made and costs curbed, he says. The paper needs to do more than produce regular annual profits (though Le Monde, in common with many of its competitors cannot even do that these days) to guarantee its future. It needs better access to capital. That means there must be a rethink of the staff structure, under which all journalists have a stake, a structure that has complicated past attempts by the paper to raise institutional funds. But at the same time, the journalists' independence, which has been their right to veto board decisions, must be protected.

"It is a bit like running a consultancy again," said Mr Lesourne, 62, who started his business career with 17 years at the head of Sema, the Anglo-French computer services group. "It is full of grey matter, which must be kept autonomous, except the difference is that the company has both an advertising and an industrial arm."

Le Monde has held a special place in French intellectual life ever since its birth in 1944, when General Charles de Gaulle asked the late Mr Hubert Beuve-Méry, the grandfather of post-war French journalism, to found a newspaper that would turn its back on the corruption and intellectual dishonesty of the pre-war French press.

Yet the early idealism has seemed far away over the past year, with the paper's journalists locked in political battles over who would succeed Mr André Fontaine, the former director who retired in January. The journalists' choice was Mr Daniel Vernet, then managing editor, but in the

A world of difference

William Dawkins talks to Jacques Lesourne, the new boss of France's most distinguished daily newspaper



Lesourne: rare breed

end, the non-journalist shareholders - a mixture of supportive readers and industrial companies - rejected him on the grounds that someone with business experience was needed to lead Le Monde out of its financial difficulties.

Le Monde has taken on the extra costs of moving to its futuristic new headquarters and opening a new print plant at the worst possible moment. The advertising downturn, and the paper's debt burden, last year wiped out the paper's profits. It is unlikely to return to the black until 1992.

What was needed was a leader who could straddle the two worlds of journalism and management. Mr Fontaine, one of the few men in France who seems to fit that description, just as the latter was settling down to write a book for the summer holidays.

Mr Lesourne received the drain from the Maghreb, to the rental market for industrial property. He reveals himself as a keen European and a tough manager. He is also a fierce defender of the independent line which Le Monde has pursued - with only the odd kick - since its foundation.

Mr Lesourne will take a tougher grip on Le Monde's business management than his four predecessors; soon after his arrival, the cover price rose. But he has also already shown that he cannot resist the temptation to step himself in journalism almost as much as the bosses who went before.

To be editor and chief executive at the same time is unheard of in Anglo-Saxon newspapers. But it is an immutable part of Le Monde's tradition, and unsurprising given the usual French practice of giving the top person in a company the job of both president and managing director.

Mr Lesourne says he might write the odd economics piece - implying that he will not appear as regularly as Mr Fontaine. Yet he will have a big contribution to make to debate

on the issues of the day. One of his big priorities will be to encourage journalists to broaden their analysis and to broaden the content in which they view events. "If there is a willingness to make the larger view more often," he says.

He is also pre-occupied with tensions between the developing world and the west. "In the next 10 years, I expect the place of the Third World to be much more important in our coverage," he says. Cynics used to tease Le Monde in the 1970s for its obsession with the developing world, especially in North Africa. But Mr Lesourne worries that it may have subsequently gone too far in the other direction; he has just reopened an office in Bangkok after seven years.

There will be classes in the Third World, who will increasingly move to Europe. Already we are seeing a brain drain from North Africa into France. How Europe is going to react will be another big question," he says.

Within France, a debate on "civitas" and national identity has been under way for years, visible on the fringes of politics in the success of the extreme right National Front. Mr Lesourne believes the identity of the French state will be a vitally important question for Le Monde in the decade to come. He wonders how far the French tradition of the state as protector and provider will survive the growing integration of Europe.

"What will it mean to be French in the year 2000? The French believe that French thought is universal. Can we be universal and French at the same time?"

Mr Lesourne fiercely rejects suggestions that Le Monde has drifted towards the government line in recent years. "The government is increasingly irritated by our positions," he maintains with satisfaction.

The problem is that it has become increasingly hard to distinguish between the policies of government and opposition since the end of the Socialist experiment with economic and industrial interventionism in 1981-1983. This might explain why personal battles have become the dominant feature of centre-ground French politics, adds Mr Lesourne.

Clearly, Mr Lesourne has not just swapped a journalist for a single-minded manager as his new leader. He will have to strike a fine balance if he is to keep a firm hand on the business while at the same time giving a free hand to Le Monde's fragile intellectual culture.



FOREIGN AFFAIRS

These are certainly decisive days for the future of Iraq. It is very difficult to get a clear idea of what is going on from outside the country, and probably even more difficult for most people inside, given the disruption of communications caused by the allied bombing and now by the allied occupation of part of the south. But it sounds as if there is an insurrection, accompanied by heavy fighting, in most of the southern cities where the mass of the Shia Moslems - the majority community in the country - lives.

In the northern mountains, Kurdish nationalists claim to have surrounded the city of Sulaimaniya, though as of yesterday they had not confirmed the claim to have occupied it, made on their behalf by the spokesman of another opposition group in Iraq.

Yet in Baghdad, the only place where there are reporters from the international media, there had up to yesterday been no visible sign that the government's authority was being questioned. It was able to send representatives to the south to negotiate with allied commanders last Sunday - although admittedly it took them 24 hours longer than originally planned to get there - and to begin implementing the agreements reached there, with the release of 10 allied prisoners on Monday.

Everyone must be a little surprised at the co-operative attitude the regime is now displaying after so much belligerent intransigence before the fighting started and even, until the very last days, while it was going on. There is a grotesque contrast between the absurd claims of victory still pouring out of Radio Baghdad and the subject eagerness of the government to comply with all the conditions imposed by the allies for a permanent ceasefire. President Saddam Hussein is clearly not pursuing the strategy which many of us most feared, of deliberately provoking the allies into a war deep inside Iraq.

Evidently he does not relish the prospect of returning to the clandestine existence he led, in rather easier circumstances,

Edward Mortimer

The Iraqis deserve better

The west should resist the temptation to foster another strongman in Baghdad

before 1968. He has made a lot of enemies inside and outside Iraq since then. For all his rhetoric, he is not the leader of a revolutionary mass movement. He is the head of a highly-organised police state, and his only real hope of survival is to maintain himself in that position. He has realised belatedly that a deal with the allies, no matter how humiliating, is the one chance he still has of doing that.

Appallingly enough, the allies are close to concluding that such a deal might be in their interests too. Of course they would still prefer a leader with another face and name. Dealing again with Mr Saddam personally, after all that has been said about him, would be awkward and embarrassing. But in practice it may not make all that much difference. For external purposes, Mr Sad-

dam's teeth have been drawn, and he might even be more amenable to external pressure than another leader, precisely because there are so many outstanding claims and grudges against him. Internally, of course, his teeth will still draw blood (they are doing so even as I write), but another leader from the same stable would not necessarily be any milder. In any case, concern for the human rights of individuals in Iraq has never been at the top of the allied agenda. Rulers of other Arab countries, with the exception of Syria, would prefer power in Iraq to remain in the hands of the Sunni Arab minority, which has dominated successive Iraqi regimes since the state was set up in 1921, rather than see it pass to the Shia majority. The fact that the only political movements and leaders so far named in connection with the uprising (if such it is) in the south are Islamic ones closely connected

anything better. The Kurdish leaders, in spite of their justified resentment of the fact that their people, divided among four Middle Eastern states (or five if we count the Soviet Union) has never been allowed the right of self-determination, have consistently adopted the slogan of "an autonomous Kurdistan in a democratic Iraq".

The Shia leaders too have been persuaded, since the failure of their people to rise in support of Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, that Iraq is too complex and heterogeneous a society for its problems to be solved by an Islamic revolution on the Iranian model.

Kurds and Shias came together last December, and have been joined by secular and liberal opponents of Saddam Hussein's regime including some disaffected Sunni officers, on a platform that calls for human rights and democracy. The allies, in their own interests as well as those of Iraq, should encourage them to stick to this platform, and to each other.

Such a programme for Iraq may sound utopian. Yet the conditions that make democracy work may be closer to being fulfilled in Iraq than in any other Arab country. As a pseudonymous Iraqi economist pointed out on this page just days ago, Iraq is a rich country not only in oil but in other natural and above all human resources, with a literate population and a highly-educated élite.

It is also rich, too rich, in experience of where extremist politics can lead. The revolution of 1958, greeted with enthusiasm at the time by most sections of the population, was accompanied by an orgy of violence and led to a series of military regimes, each resting on a narrower base of support than the last and culminating in Saddam's dictatorship. Iraq's political class is haunted by that memory, as Spain's under Franco was by the memory of the civil war. Admittedly Franco was a very enlightened dictator compared to Saddam, but even under Saddam the country did develop, especially before he began his gross misdirection of its resources into aggression against other states. The Iraqi people now must be in many ways more sophisticated than they were in 1958. They deserve another chance.

Le Monde

offer with understandable surprise, dismissed it as unlikely while he finished his book, then accepted it with even more surprise when it became clear that Mr Vernet's candidature would fail. He had just a few weeks to lead out small groups of Le Monde journalists, a careful and diplomatic approach which has won plaudits from the staff.

Mr Lesourne is a typically multi-talented product of the French élite. Apart from his business experience, he is a skilled pianist, has written 19 books on economics and international politics and held down an economics professorship at a respected Parisian university for 17 years.

His animated conversation shifts across a field as wide as Mr Lesourne's own life: from the crisis of the French national identity in end-of-century Europe, through the brain

LETTERS

Assurance on ethical questions in business research

From Mr Robin Wensley.

Sir, The comments by Simon Holberton ("Unanswered ethical questions", February 28) seem to imply a widespread lack of concern among business schools about ethical issues as a whole and the funding of research more specifically. While there are clearly critical distinctions between consultancy and research, it is too simple to assume that research funded by research councils is "good" while that funded by companies is "bad".

At Warwick Business School, which currently receives around 40 per cent of its research funding from research

councils, we nevertheless also have in operation two very successful subscription clubs supporting the Centre for Corporate Strategy and Change and the Financial Options Research Centre. Neither of these clubs has significantly influenced either the publication of our research, beyond that common concern about confidentiality for both individuals and organisations, or the extent to which we take a critical and evaluative view of practice.

For many schools, like Warwick, it is also hardly novel to suggest that they should evaluate academic staff on teaching,

research and participation in school activities. Simon Holberton confuses a real issue with a particular funding mechanism. As his own example of John Kay indicates, it is the potential misuse of the name of an individual academic that is the problem rather than the role of research subscription clubs. To confuse the two is rather like arguing against boards of directors because of the occasional misuse of the external status of non-executive directors.

Robin Wensley, chairman, Warwick Business School, Coventry, Warwickshire

From Professor Howard Newby.

Sir, I was pleased to see that Simon Holberton, in his article "Unanswered ethical questions", suggests that it is necessary to create another funding body exclusively for business research.

The article recognises that the Economic and Social Research Council is a source of independent funds for social science research of the highest quality which, of course, includes business research.

The ESRC is already committed to working with business and is happy to consider the joint funding of high-quality research. Necessarily, any research we fund must - and will be - disinterested.

Prof Howard Newby, chairman, Economic and Social Research Council, Cherry Orchard East, Kenilworth Park, Swindon

Advice for the bank manager

From Mr Colin Clark.

The penultimate paragraph of his column "Excess of good manners on the south coast", March 4, implies that the involvement of banks in the management of troubled companies would be beneficial.

In the light of the results currently being reported by the banks, could he enlighten us as to why they can run other people's companies better than their own?

Colin Clark, Royal Mint Level, Europe House, World Trade Centre, E1

Make SIB deadlines easier to meet

From Mr R Wells.

Sir, David Walker, has made a plea to his critics to be "more specific" when commenting on the regulatory shake-up over which he is presiding. As a lawyer attempting to advise on the regulatory structure, let me be specific. The SIB core rules were issued in draft form in the summer of 1990 and comments were invited by mid-October.

These rules, however, are of little use to practitioners on their own because they need to be read in conjunction with the detailed "third tier rules" to be made by the various SROs. Some SROs have still to publish their third tier rules, but just before Christmas the Investment Managers Regulatory Organisation (Imro) duly published its offer in two volumes (800 pages), carefully basing on the SIB core rules, invited comments by the end of February.

At the beginning of Febru-

ary, however, the SIB, in a farce of self-congratulation, published its core rules in their final form. What the SIB did not say was that the core rules had been substantially revised, thus rendering almost unrecognisable third tier rules in some important areas (such as polarisation and Peps).

Now Imro sends its members two vital consultative documents demanding comments by March 28. Throughout the financial services industry I meet people who are throwing up their hands in horror as they try to meet deadlines imposed on the industry by the SIB while the SIB itself moves the goal posts during the game.

No, Sir David, that is not "generalised whingeing" - it is a plea for a more realistic attitude to the problems of securing compliance when resources within the industry are not limitless.

R Wells, 5 Park Road, Lewes, E Sussex

Separate deals on pay and hours at W.H. Smith

From Mr Jeremy Windust.

Sir, In an employment page article "W.H. Smith agrees 8.5 per cent pay rise" (February 28), the writer reported on two issues with which my union, the RBA retail book association, has been in negotiation and consultation with W.H. Smith.

These two separate issues - the annual pay review and cuts in hours which the company has concluded are necessary in light of the recession - have been reported as a "pay and productivity deal". However,

the 8.5 per cent pay offer was put to our members quite independently of any question of cuts in hours, and, indeed, the pay deal covers large numbers of staff for instance, department managers, for whom cuts in hours did not apply.

The term "pay and productivity deal" clearly implies that the pay offer was linked with cuts in hours, which was not the case.

Second, it was reported that the so-called agreed cuts in working hours will last for a year. In fact, the company told

the RBA that the cuts would be reviewed after four months, and staff have been asked to agree to temporary reductions in hours over that initial period.

Detailed agreements are being reached on implementing these reductions on a branch by branch basis, and it is our hope that cuts can be restored at the earliest opportunity.

Jeremy Windust, general secretary, RBA, 8-9 Commercial Road, Swindon

Lottery factors in TV contracts

From Mr W.L. King.

Sir, Your report ("TV chief warns franchise round could be disastrous", February 27) the view of the Independent Television Commission, that there is a danger of television franchises going to whichever company takes the most optimistic view of the market and bids high on that basis.

Apart from the rogue low-bidder coming through to win on the basis of exceptional circumstances, provided for in the Broadcasting Act (which is not really what Mr Dyke was referring to), there is also a potential financial sieve or exclusion.

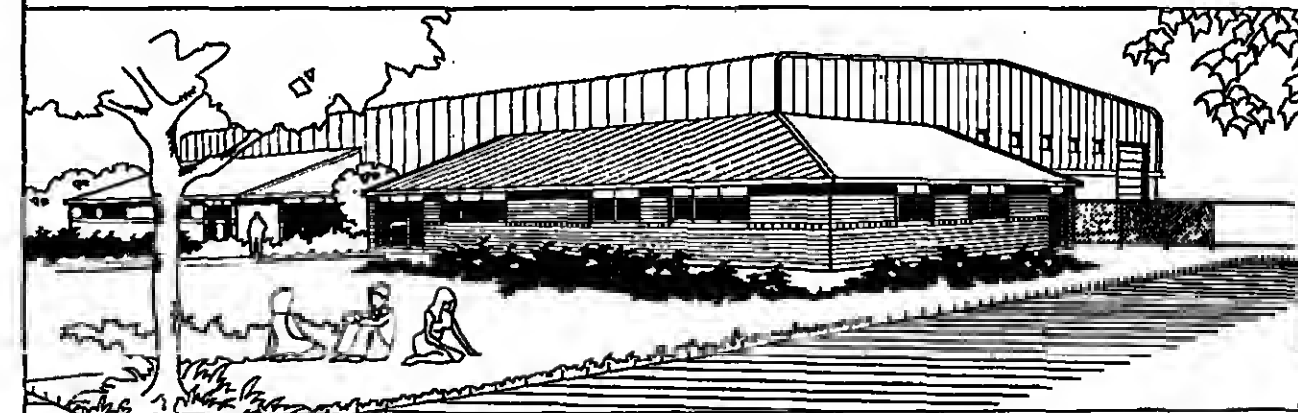
The Independent Television Commission must not consider bids unless the bidder will and can comply with certain requirements (including a commitment to screen high quality programmes), throughout the licence period.

For this purpose, the ITC will be checking the financial foundations underlying applications to see that they are realistic; the ITC will be taking a merchant bank's advice for this purpose. Bidders who are too optimistic will thus be excluded.

This all adds to the lottery factor. Applicants will have to make assumptions and prepare financial forecasts which get through the above vetting procedure, so they must not be too optimistic. But they must seek to outbid their unidentified rivals.

W.L. King, Macfarlanes, 10 Norwich Street, EC4

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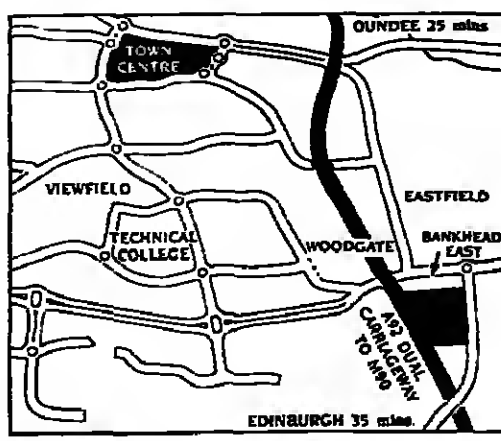
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Brady's bank reform plans come under fire

Some of the more far-reaching ideas may be watered down, writes Peter Riddell

Mr Nicholas Brady, US treasury secretary, always knew that to propose far-reaching changes to the US banking system would invite criticism from the myriad of affected bodies.

So it has proved. After an interval while the telephone directory-size report was digested, there has been a flurry of critical comment in the past week as Mr Brady has testified before the Senate and House Banking committees and all-and sundry have offered their view.

Yet it is not all bad news for Mr Brady. The comments of congressmen showed widespread support for the principle of reform, more strongly expressed in the Senate than in the House. There was backing for stronger supervision and earlier intervention with troubled banks, as well as some limited changes in bank structure.

The greatest support is for a proposal which would allow banks to operate across state lines. At present, bank holding companies can own subsidiaries in several states (with a handful of exceptions), but they have to be separately capitalised.

Mr Brady has said nationwide branching is the priority - often claiming that it could save as much as \$10bn, compared with current annual



US treasury secretary Nicholas Brady: not all bad news

bank profits of \$25bn, while providing considerable benefits to consumers.

This proposal has also been backed by congressional watchdogs such as the General Accounting Office (GAO), although with expansion limited just to financially strong banks, and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

However, Mr Brady still faces considerable scepticism from congressmen from small towns and rural areas worried that big national groups will gobble up local community banks.

These doubts may lead to amendments requiring the approval of state regulators. There was much less support

on the committees for allowing commercial groups to own banks (also opposed by both the CBO and GAO) and for breaking down the barriers between commercial banking and other financial services, which the administration seems to regard as a lower priority.

The main immediate focus is on reform of deposit insurance - both the short-term recapitalisation of the bank insurance fund and changing the insurance system.

The Treasury proposed a compromise, retaining back the federal guarantee to \$100,000 per depositor per bank for the time being, while retaining the "too big to fail" approach of

protecting uninsured depositors in exceptional, defined circumstances.

Mr Brady believes "too big to fail" has to be kept, not least because other countries maintain such an approach.

His plan has satisfied few. Supporters of small banks argue that large banks would have a big advantage, especially with nationwide branching. Others have argued that protection of uninsured depositors, if it is a least-cost solution, in practice represents little change.

The CBO yesterday argued that federal regulators would still have too much discretion in protecting large banks, saying it might be preferable to accept a small risk of contagion runs on banks in exchange for the benefits of greater market discipline.

However, the GAO has said that "due to the current stresses in the banking system it does not believe that placing all uninsured depositors at greater risk (by cutting back insurance coverage) is wise at this time."

A further controversy has developed over the Treasury's plan to cut the number of federal regulators from four to two, taking regulatory work away from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and limiting the Fed's role to supervising holding companies in

which the main bank is state chartered. At present the Fed regulates all bank holding companies, covering 90 per cent of all US bank assets and most international transactions. But under the plan, the Fed would lose its regulatory authority over federally chartered banks although it would still supervise banks such as Bankers Trust, Chemical and Morgan Guaranty.

A new Treasury agency would supervise companies where the main bank is federally chartered, such as Citibank and Bank America. The Fed strongly opposes this provision, arguing that such a change would undermine its operation of monetary policy and its ability to handle shocks to the financial system.

Such specific criticisms may undermine the general thrust of reform, especially as the legislative package, promised by the end of February, has not yet appeared.

Some banking legislation will almost certainly pass this year - in spite of serious divisions and lack of clear leadership on the House Banking committee. But the odds are that Mr Brady will have to accept the deferment, or substantial watering down, of some of his more far-reaching ideas for changing US banking.

Midland takes its medicine

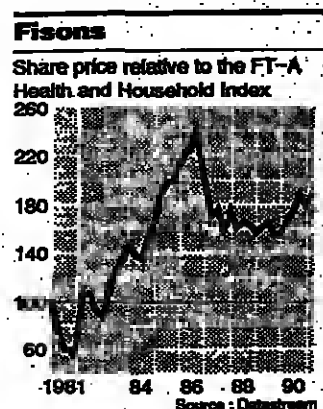
The departure of Midland Bank's chairman and the halving of its annual dividend have undoubtedly symbolic force. Indeed, the world of the UK clearing banker may never be quite the same again. The response by the British financial establishment has been in one sense traditional: to install a couple of heavyweights from elsewhere in its ranks and leave Midland to dig itself out of its hole. The alternative approach, that of rescue by takeover, looks more remote than ever. From this viewpoint, it is the more welcome that Midland should have been seen to pay for its mistakes like any other organisation.

While the dividend cut was more than justified by the trading performance, it leaves a nasty hole in future policy. There is no saying how much profit Midland will make this year. The outlook for its core UK business is so bleak that bad debts may well increase again. It may be that the gradual unwinding of its treasury mismatch, an improving LDC debt position and the continuing profitability of Midland Montagu will allow some modest recovery in this year's profits. But the possibility of a further cut in dividend cannot absolutely be ruled out either.

That said, there is a sense of clearing the decks about yesterday's results. The tax provisions and ACT write-off leave room for significant tax relief on future profits. Work on the cost base, while it still has a long way to go, is at last yielding results. But there will be no real basis for valuing the shares until the new board makes its decision on the next interim payment. The most that can be said in the meantime is that an historic yield of 6.4 per cent makes Midland look curiously expensive as a recovery play compared with 7.0 per cent from NatWest. And after all, NatWest's chairman last week made precisely the point illustrated in different fashion by Midland yesterday: that the chairman of a UK clearer is running a business as well as a bank.

UK Telecoms

Yesterday's government statement on the future of the UK telecoms industry is no bad news for British Telecom's profitability, at least in the short run. Competition may indeed hot up eventually, but BT has got at least part of what it has been gunning for of the policy. Meanwhile, it is sitting on an industry which is still growing despite the



Share price relative to the FT-A Health and Household Index

Source: Datastream

argue that Europe's mega-carriers - BA's real competitors - are not under any serious pressure to give ground in their domestic markets. Here he certainly has a point. With the EC's liberalisation programme running out of steam, Air France and Lufthansa have been allowed to get away with excessive concentration at home. Perhaps in the current dismal trading climate, BA's shareholders should simply hope for an all-out auction at Heathrow. Those BA slots would probably be the most valuable asset in its balance sheet.

Fisons

Putting yesterday's full year figures from Fisons alongside those from Glaxo, the thought occurs that one other stock must be wrongly priced. Fisons has just produced a rate of earnings growth more than double Glaxo's and may do the same this year. Therefore, a company as small as Fisons need only produce a worthwhile drug every five years or so to maintain momentum, while Glaxo needs a continuous stream of blockbusters. Yet Fisons' shares are on M times this year's earnings, Glaxo's on 17 times.

Part of the problem is Fisons' well-known dependence on financial engineering: the 22 per cent tax charge, the \$9.9m net profit on \$116m of net debt. But the trick of borrowing in dollars to make deposits in sterling, for instance, was copied by Glaxo for the first time last year. And while such earnings are obviously worth less than those from prescription drugs or scientific equipment, Fisons shows a remarkable knack for repeating them.

It is also undeniable that on paper at any rate, Fisons' 1990 R&D budget looks remarkably productive: not only treatments for asthma and epilepsy, but such modest potential best-sellers as an ACE-inhibitor heart drug and a proton pump inhibitor for ulcers. Financing these drugs through development and marketing is, of course, another matter. But the scientific equipment division is there at least partly to smooth earnings through the bumpy patches. Failing that, a merger on the right terms would do shareholders no harm. As for the Glaxo comparison, one hesitates to call the turn on Glaxo even after the further 5 per cent surge in its shares yesterday. It could just be that Fisons is cheap.

BRITAIN'S AIRPORTS

Heathrow opened up to all airlines

By Paul Betts, Aerospace Correspondent, in London

THE BRITISH government threw open Heathrow airport to all airlines yesterday in the biggest overhaul of UK civil aviation since the privatisation of British Airways four years ago.

The decision is expected to intensify competition at the world's largest international passenger airport and underpins the government's commitment to liberalise air transport.

However, the move is also likely to spark controversy both within the government's own ranks and in the UK aviation industry.

British Airways, which is expected to face heavier competition from international carriers and domestic airlines, has always opposed the opening up of Heathrow, its main operating base. Its shares fell 8p to 165p yesterday.

Mr Richard Branson, chairman of Virgin Atlantic, the Gatwick-based long-distance airline, last night described the

decision as "a triumph for fair competition and marks the start of a new phase in UK aviation history."

Until yesterday, only airlines which had operated services at Heathrow before 1977 were allowed to use London's leading airport.

The decision, announced in the House of Commons by Mr Malcolm Rifkind, transport secretary, also clears the way for an agreement between the US and the UK on a bilateral air service accord between the two countries.

This would enable Pan American and Trans World Airlines, the two financially-troubled US carriers, to transfer their Heathrow route rights to United and American Airlines respectively.

UK and US transport officials will resume negotiations on an agreement tomorrow in Washington. The US is expected to make several concessions to open access of its

domestic market to UK carriers to enable agreement to be finally reached between the two countries.

The Civil Aviation Authority recommended in January the scrapping of the four air traffic rules in south-east England.

Mr Rifkind yesterday accepted the CAA's advice on three of them.

His decision abolishes all restrictions on new operators of international airline services, charter flights and domestic services at Heathrow and Gatwick. But he has kept the restrictions on business jets and all cargo flights at the two airports.

However, Mr Rifkind emphasised that his decision did not give new airlines automatic access to Heathrow, one of the world's most congested airports. He said airlines would have to seek take-off and landing slots at Heathrow through the existing airport scheduling committee.

"As there is already almost full utilisation of Heathrow's capacity, the net effect of abolition of the traffic distribution rules will be modest," Mr Rifkind said. But over time, the decision is likely to lead to a higher proportion of long distance airline services at Heathrow with an increasing number of short haul services being diverted to Gatwick or the new Stansted airport.

The government is reviewing slot allocation procedures and may consider introducing changes to encourage competition.

Opponents of the government's policy have argued that abolition of the rules would undermine Gatwick and Stansted and lead to even greater congestion at Heathrow. The government has come under intense lobbying from Conservative MPs in constituencies close to the three airports to maintain the status quo.

W German stores buy Centrum retail chain

By Katharine Campbell in Frankfurt

THE SALE of east Germany's largest department store chain, Centrum, has finally been completed after almost a year of tough negotiations.

The 14 stores parcelled out between the three big west German houses: Karstadt, Kaufhof and Hertie.

This gives the western groups a major foothold in the east, even if the buildings are much in need of renovation, the staff of retraining and the relatively inexperienced German citizens more inclined to spend in discount retailers for a while to come.

The stores had hoped to complete the Centrum deal well before the lucrative Christmas season, but complications over property rights, competing claims between the west Germans, and the slow-moving bureaucracy at the Treuhand privatisation agency impeded the process.

The presence of Mr Jens Odewald, Kaufhof chief executive, as supervisory board chairman of the Treuhand, former East German government body overseeing privatisation, apparently fuelled acrimony between the players.

The Treuhand said yesterday that the three stores taken together planned investments of DM165m (\$109m) in the short-term, and about DM500m over a longer period. The 2,900 jobs at the Centrum stores in the second half of 1990 estimated at DM355m.

Kaufhof, which had no properties in the area before the war, has bought stores in five towns, including Berlin and Rostock, and two properties in Chemnitz. With another location in Berlin bought a few weeks ago, Kaufhof has nearly as large an operation - floor space of 50,000 square metres and 4,000 new employees.

The smaller Hertie has just three Centrum stores but has already acquired another seven outlets including four medium-priced clothes shops in east Berlin.

All the stores have engaged in co-operation agreements with various parts of the Centrum chain for some while, which have included deliveries of western goods, staff retraining and furnishing technical knowhow. Karstadt had delivered DM136m worth of goods since currency union last July.

Congress pressed on trade talks extension

By Nancy Dunne in Washington

US PRESIDENT George Bush yesterday urged Congress to give him renewed "fast-track" authority to negotiate international trade agreements.

In an attempt to translate some of his surging post-Gulf war popularity into clout with Congress, the president insisted that "fast-track" was necessary for completing the Uruguay Round talks on liberalising world trade and for launching North American free trade talks.

With fast-track authority, the president can submit a trade agreement for approval to Congress, which must vote on the entire package without altering or amending it. The current authority expires June 1. Mr Bush wants a two-year extension.

"I know we're facing a tough

fight on this in the Congress," he told a gathering of business leaders yesterday.

But he said a vote against fast-track would be a vote against vibrant international trade and that "it would be a shame to see special interests in this country gun down fast-track."

Efforts by the administration to conciliate opponents of the Uruguay Round have begun to show signs of splitting the strong coalition against extension.

However, forces against the extension include environmentalists, farmers, consumer, church groups, textile and apparel manufacturers and labour. Their opposition is directed at the Uruguay Round, the proposed North American free trade agreement

with Canada and Mexico, or Environmental, consumer and church groups have sent letters to every member of Congress warning that the fast-track extension could evaporate "hard-fought gains" in US environmental, consumer, worker protection laws and other domestic programmes.

Trade agreements could nullify many US safety or environmental standards by classifying them as nontariff trade barriers, they say. Some environmentalists have begun to reconsider their opposition to fast-track in the hope that the administration will agree to include their concerns in the North American trade talks. They were also swayed by inclusion in the fast-track request of the admin-

istration's Enterprises for the Americas Initiative, which includes debt-for-nature swaps.

The administration's confidence over the renewal of its fast-track was shaken in November when, in an indication of Congressional dissatisfaction with the progress of the Uruguay Round, 37 senators signed a resolution to withdraw the authority.

Opposition to the proposed North American talks now threatens to derail both sets of talks and with them the administration's entire trade policy.

Fast-track opponents are expected to wait as long as possible to bring the issue to a vote in hopes that the euphoria over the Allied victory in the Gulf will have faded beneath concerns about the economy.

Gorbachev pledges backing on Gulf

Continued from Page 1

brighter than for some time. "We are agreed that all members of the permanent five (in the Security Council) must continue to work together to ensure we find a satisfactory conclusion," he said.

"Our first agreed conclusion was that we had to take into account first and foremost the views of the states in the region, so that we might meet their concerns."

"In that context, I did not see a standing British or western army (remaining in the Gulf). It is entirely possible that the Arabs themselves might have their own standing army."

Mr Major said both sides also agreed that it was desirable that there should be "restraint in exports of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons to

the region, and "caution" in the export of conventional weapons. He received no Soviet guarantee that it would not re-equip the Iraqi armed forces after their devastating defeat, however.

The Anglo-Soviet agenda also included British concerns over the slow progress in the conventional forces disarmament agreement in Vienna and, in particular, the Soviet move to reclassify army divisions as naval units. On that issue, Mr Major said he had a "most useful exchange" with Marshal Dmitri Yazov, the Soviet defence minister, but gave no hint of concessions.

Similarly, Mr Major gave no real idea about whether he was persuaded by Mr Gorbachev's continued commitment to economic reform, on which prog-

ress seems to have slowed drastically in the face of accelerating economic collapse.

Earlier in the day he met Soviet radicals, including Mr Anatoly Sobchak, the mayor of Leningrad, and Mr Boris Fyodorov, the former Russian finance minister, who argued that reforms had been stalled.

Mr Fyodorov said the central government had no macro-economic reform plan, and no understanding at all of monetary policy - a subject close to Mr Major's heart.

The prime minister in turn expressed his conviction that private property, and private land ownership, were essential steps towards a market economy, although Mr Gorbachev is known to be ideologically opposed to outright private land ownership.

UK plans big telecom changes

Continued from Page 1

ous figure was 4.5 per cent. In addition, British Telecom, which controls 95 per cent of the UK market, has agreed to reduce the cost of international calls by 10 per cent, probably by June this year.

However, for the moment the duopoly will remain in place for international services.

BT is to be allowed to introduce discounts for large users. The company will also be permitted to increase the price of rental and connection charges for businesses with more than one line at a higher rate than before.

A scheme to help about 2m low users is to be created. The scheme will be particularly directed at the elderly and infirm.

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Temperatures at midday yesterday C - Cloudy D - Drizzle F - Fair P - Fog H - Heat R - Rain S - Sunny SI - Sleet SN - Snow T - Thunder

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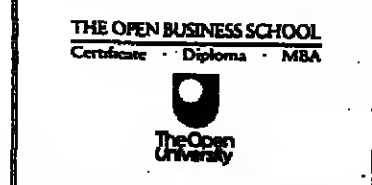
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INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES AND FINANCE

Elsevier forecasts 55% rise in 1990 net profits

By Ronald van de Krol in Amsterdam

ELSEVIER, the Dutch publisher, has announced that provisional 1990 net profit has jumped by more than 55 per cent to around F1500m (\$283.7m).

The sharp rise is due largely to extraordinary profits arising from its sale last year of a 33 per cent stake in fellow publisher Wolters Kluwer.

The figures were released a month earlier than scheduled because of moves by Pearson, the UK publishing, banking and industrial group which publishes the Financial Times, to seek buyers for its 25.5 per cent stake in Elsevier.

Elsevier, which in turn owns 9 per cent of Pearson, repeated yesterday that it has no plans

to dispose of its half of the cross-holding.

Sales in 1990 rose by 5 per cent to F12.05bn while trading income increased by 18 per cent to F1388m. Operating profit after tax - which Elsevier regards as the best indication of its performance - was up 17 per cent at F1343m.

The company emphasised that the figures were provisional because certain items, such as Pearson's final 1990 results, could only be estimated. It gave no indication whether it would raise its 1990 dividend.

In 1989, Elsevier raised its dividend by F1.04 to F1.18. Analysts said that Elsevier's net results contained an

extraordinary gain of about F150m on its sale last November of its Wolters Kluwer shares. Elsevier bought the shares in 1987 for F1575m and sold them for around F1800m last year.

Part of the book profit of F1253m will be transferred to shareholders' equity to counterbalance the goodwill write-off in 1987, thereby reducing the extraordinary gain.

Elsevier's shares fell by F1250 to close at F17450. Analysts attributed the decline to Pearson's divestment and not to yesterday's results, which were in line with expectations. Final results for 1990 will be published on April 8.

Inchcape to split top post in shake-up

By Andrew Bolger in London

INCHCAPE, the international services and marketing group, is to split the roles of chairman and chief executive, which have been held by Sir George Turnbull since 1988.

Sir George, 64, is expected to continue as chairman until 1997. The role of chief executive will be assumed by Mr Charles Mackay, who heads the group's Far East operation, Inchcape Pacific.

Inchcape also announced that from the beginning of next year the entire group would be restructured and managed on the basis of four global business streams: motors, marketing and distribution; services; and resources. Each would report to a London-based board director.

Some of the businesses are currently organised on a global basis and others by country or region. Under the new system, marketing and distribution will be one worldwide business incorporating Inchcape's consumer, industrial, business machines, and wines and spirits businesses.

Sir George said he came under no pressure from institutions or shareholders to split his role.

However, while he considered the joint role had been right at a time of great strategic change, he felt it was less appropriate when the shape of the new business had been defined.

Mr Mackay, 51, joined Inchcape in 1986 from Chloride Group where he was responsible for the overseas division. Previously he was chairman of Paktrane, the European transport division of Pakhoed Holding, the Netherlands chemical storage company.

The UK director general of fair trading said yesterday that his office had been informed of the proposal by Costs Vivella to acquire the Footol Group which was announced on Monday. It will formally consider the offer until April 4.

World Cup album boosts PolyGram

By Michael Stapleton in London

POLYGRAM, the record company which is 80 per cent owned by Philips of the Netherlands, yesterday announced 1990 net income up 7.2 per cent to F1387m (\$260m).

Turnover increased by 27.9 per cent to F1525m, aided by the album Pavarotti, Domingo, Carreras in Concert, recorded in Rome during the World Cup soccer finals and which sold over 5m copies last year, and by The Very Best of Elton John, which sold more than 4m.

About half the increase in sales came from newly-acquired companies, including A & M Records, purchased in January 1990, and Island Records, acquired in mid-1989. Other

acquisitions which contributed to increased turnover were the purchase of the remaining 50 per cent in Channel 5, the group's UK video sales company, and the increase in PolyGram's stake in Nippon Phonogram from 50 per cent to 65 per cent.

Operating income increased by 29.1 per cent to F1590m, but net income was hit by a drop in interest earnings. Largely as a result of the loss of funds used for acquisitions, financial income fell from a gain of F158m in 1989 to a loss of F16m last year. PolyGram was also affected by the costs of reorganising its newly-acquired US businesses.

Earnings per share were up only 1 per cent to F12.10, diluted by the 10m additional shares issued when Philips floated 30 per cent of the music group on the Amsterdam and New York stock exchanges in December 1989.

The gross dividend was F10.50, the company's first since its flotation.

Mr Alain Levy, PolyGram's president and chief executive, said the group had increased its share of the world music market from 15 per cent in 1989 to 17.5 per cent last year. The group was Europe's biggest record company with a market share of 28 per cent but was still relatively weak in the US.

Mr Levy said that US market share had risen from 8.5 per cent to 10.2 per cent last year. He hoped to see an increase to 14 per cent this year.

Mr Jani Cook, PolyGram's chief financial officer, said the company was still not profitable in the US, although he said that it would be by the end of this year.

PolyGram had the advantage that 85 per cent of its unit sales were of compact discs, compared with 37 per cent for the industry as a whole, Mr Cook said. In 1989, 37 per cent of PolyGram sales had been CDs. In 1988, the figure was 10 per cent.

Alusuisse plans share change

ALUSUISSE-Lonza, the Swiss aluminium and chemicals group, said yesterday that it plans to open its registered shares to foreign investors.

The company announced the move while releasing details of a 42.5 per cent fall in net profits to Sfr288m (\$200m) and a rise in the dividend.

Foreign investors will be limited to holding 3 per cent of the registered shares. The company will also limit the voting rights of any single shareholder to 5 per cent of total votes and it will raise the quorum required for statute changes to three-quarters of all votes represented at its annual shareholders' meeting.

Neutle, Jacobs Suchard, Ciba-Geigy and Brown Boveri have made similar moves in attempts to encourage foreign investment in Swiss companies.

Alusuisse's share capital at the end of 1990 was Sfr582m, made up of 1.49bn registered shares with a nominal value of Sfr125, 1.35bn bearer shares of Sfr250 per value and 2.3bn Sfr25 participation certificates. The bearers rose Sfr40 to Sfr110 yesterday and the registered shares, valued at virtually the same p/e and yield bases, by Sfr10 to Sfr650.

Traders said the share price rise was technically driven as the market pushed the bearer shares to a two-to-one ratio

with the registered stock, corresponding to the shares' nominal values.

The parent company reported a 2.3 per cent rise in 1990 net profit to Sfr138m, although the group's net dipped 42.5 per cent to Sfr288m.

Group cash flow last year slipped 30.1 per cent to Sfr566m, while sales dropped 10.6 per cent to Sfr634m.

The parent company plans a dividend boost to Sfr35 a bearer share for 1990, up Sfr5 from the year before, to Sfr120 a registered share, up from Sfr15.00, and Sfr3.50 a participation certificate, up from Sfr3.

Esselte falls 75% and cuts its dividend

By John Burton in Stockholm

ESSELTE, the Swedish office products group, yesterday reported a 75 per cent fall in profits after financial items on its SKR145m (\$25.4m) for 1990. The dividend payment was cut from SKR8 per share to SKR5.25.

Sales fell by 3 per cent to SKR16bn. But profits after extraordinary income rose to SKR1.6bn from SKR33m due to the sale last year of property holdings, printing operations and the Nordsteds publishing

company. The divestments, which netted a capital gain of SKR2.9bn, reflected Esselte's decision to concentrate on its core business area of office products.

Earnings fell as demand weakened in the company's biggest markets, the US, the UK and the Nordic region.

Esselte is restructuring its operations, including cutting its workforce by 2,400, an 11 per cent reduction. This added

SKR749m in extraordinary costs to last year's results, which combined with costs associated with the complete takeover of its US subsidiary, Esselte Business Systems, reduced its extraordinary income to SKR1.44bn.

Esselte predicted that the 1991 results would improve despite continued weak market demand since the restructuring programme will reduce operating costs.

Fisons meets expectations with £230.2m

By Clive Cookson in London

FISONS yesterday met the market's high expectations by announcing 1990 pre-tax profits up 36 per cent to £230.2m (\$436.7m).

The UK pharmaceutical, horticultural and scientific equipment group said that growth in existing businesses was responsible for a 29 per cent increase in profits. VG Instruments - acquired in February 1990 - contributed the remaining 16 per cent.

Mr John Kerridge, chairman, was in brief mood at the results press conference. He looked forward to sustained above-average growth "throughout the 1990s", boosted by promising new drugs in the development pipeline.

Mr Kerridge said 1990 was a "highly satisfactory year" for

all three Fisons divisions. Group sales rose by 18 per cent to £1.303bn. Earnings per share were up 20 per cent to 26.3p and the total dividend for the year was increased by 21 per cent to 7.5p.

Some analysts had been concerned, before the results were announced, about the impact of the recession on the scientific equipment division, but Mr Kerridge said it turned out to be virtually recession-proof, like the pharmaceutical business. The £27m acquisition of VG Instruments from BAT "has confirmed Fisons' best expectations" and turned the group into the world's third largest scientific instrument company.

Sales of scientific equipment rose to £620m (\$462m) and profits from the division were £67m (\$31m).

The horticultural business - closest to Fisons' historical roots but now the smallest of the three divisions - pushed up sales to £34m (£78m) and profits to £10m (£28m). It flourished in spite of severe drought in Europe and a consumer campaign against Pisons by environmentalists.

The pharmaceutical division boosted its margins, with profits up 19 per cent to £151m from £127m on a 6 per cent increase in sales to £501m from £473m.

Two respiratory (asthma) drugs, Intal and Tilade, account for one third of Fisons' pharmaceutical sales and both are making good progress.

Tilade is selling better in continental Europe than in the UK, according to Mr Kerridge,

and a new "mint flavoured" version of the drug has helped sales in Germany where asthma patients objected to the drug's bitter taste.

Approval of Tilade by the Food and Drug Administration in the US is "just around the corner".

Fisons executives are enthusiastic about drugs which are likely to emerge from the development pipeline in four to five years - in particular Tilade, a new steroid treatment for respiratory diseases.

Dr Peter Woods, corporate affairs director, disputed analysts' claims that earnings would suffer from a gap in the development programme before these new products reached the market in the second half of the 1990s. *See Page 18*

Italian insurers unravel assets

By Haig Simonian in Milan

GENERALI and Rionione Adriatica di Sicurtà (RAS), Italy's first and second-biggest private sector insurance companies, are shuffling their assets in Austria in a long-awaited untangling of the complex cross-shareholdings in the local market.

The agreement, which still requires regulatory approval, was signed by Mr Johannes Petersen, RAS's chairman, and Generali's Austrian director, who will formally consider the offer until April 4.

as well as control of two small German insurance companies, Münchener Lebensversicherung and Interunfall Allgemeine Versicherungs.

Both WAV and Interunfall-RAS, which are quoted companies, rank among Austria's biggest insurers, with 1990 premiums of Sch6bn (\$554m) and Sch6.1bn (including life) respectively. WAV, which operates in the life sector, had premiums of Sch1.9bn last year.

The deal will marginally reduce Generali's presence in Austria, where it will remain the country's biggest insurer. In return, RAS is giving Generali its majority stake in Interunfall-RAS Versicherung,

as well as control of two small German insurance companies, Münchener Lebensversicherung and Interunfall Allgemeine Versicherungs.

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Renault expects fall in earnings

By George Graham in Paris

RENAULT, the French state-owned car maker, is expected to report a sharp drop in earnings last year to around FF10bn (\$2.2bn), compared with its record 1989 profits of FF19.3bn.

With car sales declining throughout Europe, the French motor group lost market share in many of its key markets, dropping to less than 10 per cent of the European car market.

In the trucks and heavy vehicles sector, Renault maintained its market share but still saw sales decline.

In addition, it is understood to have had to make continuing heavy restructuring provisions at Mack, the US trucks company of which it has now taken full control.

The depression in the Latin American economy, too, has hit Renault's Argentine subsidiary, which is expected to have recorded around FF1bn of losses last year.

Earnings will also be depressed by the poor performance of the French group's 10 per cent stake in Volvo, the Swedish car maker.

Renault's results are not due to be published for some weeks, and the company yesterday refused to comment on the reports, which have emerged from Renault officials at the time of the annual shareholders' meeting.

The French company's sales have continued to suffer in the first two months of this year and it has been obliged to lay off workers.

Registration statistics published yesterday by the French vehicle manufacturer's association showed Renault's sales had dropped by 28 per cent last month compared with the same month of 1989.

Citroen, Renault's domestic rival, suffered a 31 per cent drop in sales in February, but foreign car brands saw their sales fall only 9 per cent.

Kemira falls to FM139m

By Enrique Tossieri in Helsinki

KEMIRA, the Finnish state-owned fertiliser, paint, and titanium dioxides group, reported a drop in consolidated profits before appropriations and taxes during 1990 to FM139m (\$37.45m), against FM215m the previous year.

Operating income before depreciation fell to FM1.66bn from FM1.98bn and accounted for 14.6 and 15.3 per cent of net sales respectively. Consolidated sales rose by 3 per cent to FM11.4bn.

Kemira blamed the drop in profitability on rationalisation and the recession.

Correction Trelleborg

THE first paragraph in yesterday's article on Trelleborg, the Swedish mining and industrial group, should have stated that the company lifted its dividend despite a 16 per cent fall in profits to SKR2.5bn (\$404m).

PolyGram is A HIT ON CD, TAPE, VINYL, VIDEO AND PAPER.

SUMMARY 1990 RESULTS

IN NETHERLANDS GUILDERS

	YEAR END 31 DEC '90	INCREASE ON '89
NET SALES	NLG 5252 million	+27.9%
INCOME FROM OPERATIONS	NLG 590 million	+29.1%
NET INCOME	NLG 357 million	+7.2%
NET INCOME PER SHARE	NLG 2.10	+1.0%
PROPOSED DIVIDEND	NLG 0.50 (first dividend since flotation)	

PolyGram NV's shares are listed on the Amsterdam and New York stock exchanges. In 1990 the group achieved its sixth consecutive year of growth. PolyGram's full results are published in its annual report

which will be sent to registered shareholders on 2 April, 1991. If you would like a copy, write to: The Investor Relations Department, PolyGram NV, at any of the addresses below:

GERRIT VAN DER VEENLAAN 4,
3745 DN BAARN, HOLLAND.

WORLDWIDE PLAZA, 825 EIGHTH AVENUE,
NEW YORK, NY 10018, USA.

30 BERKELEY SQUARE, LONDON
W1X 5HA, UNITED KINGDOM.

PolyGram

Carrefour up 14%

CARREFOUR, the French supermarket group, has lifted annual net profit by 14 per cent after payments to minority interests, to FF1.35bn (\$254m) in 1990 from FF1.18bn the previous year, AP-DJ reports from Paris.

Consolidated revenue was 8 per cent higher at FF75.8bn, from FF70.14bn. Earnings per share were up 14 per cent to FF211.48 from FF184.91. The 1991 net dividend will be FF65 a share, up 8.3 per cent from the 1990 level.

DFDS profits cut by half

DFDS, Denmark's second largest shipping line by turnover, showed a drop in net profits to DKR94m (\$16m) in 1990 compared with DKR189m for the previous year, writes Xueqing Lin in Copenhagen.

The shipping line which is best known for its passenger arm, Scandinavian Seaways, blamed the strong Danish kroner and the high price of oil in the second half-year for the drop.

passenger figures after the disaster on the Scandinavian Star passenger ferry, owned by the Danish De-No Ferry, in which 158 passengers lost their lives in April last year.

The loss related to the disaster is estimated at DKR20m.

In general, DFDS reported satisfactory results for the passenger division, with a 3 per cent overall increase in passengers and the successful completion of renewal programme for the ferry fleet.

INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES AND FINANCE

Royal Bank of Canada 15% lower

By Bernard Simon in Toronto

A SHARP rise in loan losses and non-performing loans pulled Royal Bank of Canada's first-quarter earnings down by 15 per cent, more than offsetting higher interest income from the US and other international operations.

Net earnings of North America's third biggest bank fell to C\$32m (US\$50m), or 70 cents a share, in the three months to January 31, from C\$47m, or 86 cents, a year earlier. Return on common equity dropped to 15.3

per cent from 21.1 per cent, while return on assets slipped to 0.71 per cent from 0.92 per cent.

The bank said it has raised its estimate of fiscal 1991 loan losses to C\$560m, a third higher than last year's write-offs. As a result, first-quarter provisions were C\$140m, up from C\$80m a year earlier.

Non-performing loans, excluding those to Third World debtors, stood at C\$1.7bn at the end of January, more than double

the level of C\$784m a year earlier.

Mr Allan Taylor, the bank's chairman, said: "Although we've not escaped the effects of the current recession, we're weathering it well."

Canadian banks have generally had more conservative lending policies than their US counterparts in recent years, and have benefited from their wide geographic and strong retail base.

RBC's ratio of capital to

assets, currently at 8.1 per cent, exceeds the 1992 target set by the Bank for International Settlements. Assets have grown by almost 11 per cent in the past year to C\$130.8bn.

Net interest income rose by 5.8 per cent in the latest quarter to C\$631.6m. Income from domestic loans was stagnant, but international business was boosted by higher loan volumes in the US, lower non-performing loans and a jump in payments from Venezuela.

Chrysler in talks to replace credit line

By Martin Dickson in New York

CHRYSLER, the US motor manufacturer which has suffered a reduction of its credit ratings below investment grade, is trying to negotiate more flexible lines of credit with its banks.

The company is in talks with 38 banks, led by Manufacturers Hanover, to replace its existing \$2.6bn line of credit with one of about \$1.75bn.

Although the new line would be smaller than the existing one, it would not impose such onerous financial performance ratios on the company.

Chrysler, which has not drawn down any of the \$2.6bn line, might face difficulty meeting its financial performance criteria if the current slump in the US motor industry were to continue.

The company, smallest and weakest of the big three US motor manufacturers, has recently seen the value of its shares drop to a low of \$10.50, making it very expensive for it to borrow in the public debt markets.

The group surprised analysts by making a modest profit in the fourth quarter of last year, but it expects a large loss in the current quarter.

Rainbow pays R224m for Bonny Bird

By Philip Gawth in Johannesburg

RAINBOW Chickens, South Africa's largest chicken producer, is to buy the broiler operations of a rival chicken business, Bonny Bird, and a 50 per cent stake in Epol, an animal feed business, at a total cost of R224m (\$94m).

"Bonny Bird is 50 per cent owned by Premier group, a leading player in the food industry, which is now diversifying into the highly competitive chicken market where it has struggled to make good profits. The balance of Bonny Bird is held by Bokomo and Spaza, two co-operatives in the Cape."

Premier will retain a 50 per cent stake in Epol but Rainbow will have management control.

Rainbow is paying R224m for Bonny Bird, in instalments over three years. The 50 per cent stake in Epol will cost a further R20m. The group intends to raise R244m in a rights offer.

The Bonny Bird acquisition increases Rainbow's share of the broiler industry from 35 to over 50 per cent. The white meat market in South Africa has shown 8 to 10 per cent volume growth over the past 20 years, most of this at the expense of beef with per capita consumption of the two now broadly equal.

Mr John Geoghegan, group managing director of Rainbow, also noted that the deal gave the company "major influence on both the quality and efficiency of production of feed which comprises 85 per cent of live bird production costs."

Mr Peter Wright, Premier's chairman, said: "Premier's long-standing underperformance has now been turned into a profit account and we will be participating in the dynamic growth of the exciting new feed developments."

The construction or purchase of feed mills in future will form part of a joint venture between the two companies. Within six months to December, Rainbow achieved a turnover of R354.3m with operating profit of R20.8m.

HK Electric in 'robust growth' with 12.7% rise

By Philip Gawth in Hong Kong

HONGKONG Electric Holdings, the monopoly supplier of electricity to Hong Kong, reported a 12.7 per cent rise in 1989's results.

Turnover rose 15.6 per cent to HK\$4.33bn in what Mr Simon Murray, chairman, described as a "year of robust growth" for Hongkong Electric, the main operating company.

"Electricity unit sales increased by 7.6 per cent and maximum demand reached a record of 1,613MW, 4.7 per cent higher than 1988."

"The company's primary fuel source, which insulates it from the impact of oil price increases."

The final dividend is recommended at 38 cents per share. Together with an interim of 23 cents this makes 61 cents for the year.

Surprise profit at Nine Network

By Kevin Brown in Sydney

NINE Network Australia, the quoted television channel which is 52 per cent owned by Mr Kerry Packer's Consolidated Press Holdings

(Conspress), yesterday reported net profit of A\$13.82m (US\$10.73m) for the six months to December, but no interim dividend, and forecast pre-tax profits of more than A\$105m for the full year.

The result was in sharp contrast to the network's fortunes under its former owner, Mr Alan Bond's Bond Corporation Holdings, which sold the company to Conspress last June.

Nine Network made net profit of A\$33.90m in the first half of last year and declared a dividend of A\$2.97m for the full year, which increased to A\$619m after Conspress decided to write down the value of the network's broadcasting licences.

The improved profit was the surprise, because Mr Packer had earlier anticipated in the annual report that the network's cash flow and profits would not begin to improve until the 1991-92 financial year, which begins in June.

However, Mr Nicholas Falloon, finance director, said the network's financial position was improving quickly. He forecast profits before interest and tax of between A\$105m and A\$111m for the full year unless the advertising market worsened sharply.

"We have achieved a reasonable result in extremely difficult times, but I wouldn't get carried away," Mr Falloon said. He added that a big revamp of the network carried out by management installed by Conspress had resulted in substantial cuts in operating costs.

The network said it had reduced debts to A\$320m from A\$690m when it was acquired by Conspress, and expected to owe less than A\$200m on completion of a A\$160m equity capital raising being carried out by Conspress and Australian Consolidated Industries (ACIL), its two main shareholders.

The capital raising will reduce Conspress's holding in Nine to 38 per cent. ACIL, formerly Bell Resources, will reduce its stake from 30 per cent to 21.6 per cent.

Both companies have said they will not reduce their holdings any further.

Mr Falloon said the network expected to increase its share of the television advertising market to more than 40 per cent following recent negotiations with advertising agencies.

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Key staff exodus checks Haeco

By John Elliott in Hong Kong

HONG KONG Aircraft Engineering Company (Haeco), the aircraft maintenance specialist controlled by the Swire Pacific group and its Cathay Pacific Airways subsidiary, yesterday reported a 4.9 per cent increase in after-tax profits to HK\$289.4m (US\$37.1m) for the year ended December 31 after its turnover and labour costs were hit by emigration of key engineering staff.

This follows an 8 per cent drop in profits in the first half of last year and compares with an 18.6 per cent profit increase in 1989.

Turnover was 10.6 per cent up at HK\$1.60bn last year compared with a 20 per cent rise in 1989.

During the past year, Haeco has lost about 120 of its 800 highly-skilled engineers to Hong Kong's brain drain of ethnic Chinese people who are leaving the colony to find passports abroad, especially in Australia and Canada. The total for the past two years exceeds 200.

Last week, Haeco announced it was expanding its potential capacity by purchasing a 29 per cent stake in Asia Aircraft Services, an Australian government-owned company located near Geelong in the state of Victoria. This ends Haeco's search in the UK, Canada and

elsewhere for an overseas acquisition to help ease capacity constraints at its base on Hong Kong's Kai Tak airport.

Mr Peter Suter, chairman, said that the year's results were "encouraging, bearing in mind the conditions under which we were operating."

Profits had improved in the second half of the year following a scaling down of overheads and the introduction of highly-skilled work which carried high profit margins.

A final dividend of 54 cents is being recommended. Together with a 22 cent interim, this makes a total for the year of 76 cents, compared with 74 cents in 1989.

Net premium income increased by nearly 30 per cent to R453.4m from R349.5m, approximately half of this to December 31, the acquisition of National Employers, a short-term insurer.

The group's solvency margin - the ratio of net assets to net premium income - remains healthy and was about 110 per cent at the end of December.

Mr Warren Clewlow, chief executive, announced that "action is being taken to streamline the mining division in order to enhance its contribution to earnings and to position it according to its strengths and weaknesses."

He also said ways were being examined of reducing the effect of the cyclical nature of the performance on group earnings of Barlades Steel and Alloy, the wholly-owned ferro-alloy and stainless steel subsidiary. Attributable profit dropped to R52m in 1990 from R215m in 1989.

On the platinum side, Rand Mines is desperately trying to make the expensive Crocodile River platinum mine profitable. Last year, it shut its Vansvaan vanadium operation and mothballed the Kennedy's Vale platinum mine. Rationalisation discussions probably relate to disposal of the latter two assets.

The government hopes to raise US\$1.2bn with the sale, which amounts to an indirect form of privatisation. YPF will retain a 50 per cent share in each of the four oilfields, each of which will be run by a different consortium under a 25-year management contract.

The four areas have measured oil reserves of 221.6m barrels and 4.1bn cubic metres of natural gas. Last year, YPF, which controls 60 per cent of the local market, produced 137,500 barrels of oil per day, and 48.6m cubic metres of gas per day.

This is the second leg of a privatisation process that began last year with the US\$242m sale of YPF's marginal oilfields.

KeyCorp, the Albany, New York-based multi-regional bank holding company with more than 370 banking offices in eight states, has filed for an offering of up to 4m common shares through underwriters led by Salomon and Montgomery Securities. Renter reports from Albany.

The company, which had assets of \$13.3bn at December 31 1990, said proceeds would be used to repay \$80m of floating rate debt and for general corporate purposes.

The credit card could generate

new revenues in the form of fees and interest charges for the company, which besides its telephone utilities sells cellular phone services, voice mail (personal message services) and telephone directories.

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According to local reports, the card would be an "affinity" card from Visa or MasterCard issued by a bank or financial institution, but with the Ameritech logo. Ameritech would offer the card to its 12m customers in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

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One-off charge hits Newmont

By John Elliott in Hong Kong

NEWMONT Australia was forced to account for an extraordinary loss of A\$257.5m (US\$200m) in the year to December 31, primarily because of its acquisition of fellow gold miner BHP Gold. Reuter reports from Melbourne.

Newmont Australia, 23 per cent owned by Broken Hill Proprietary, reported a strong rise in net profit to A\$47.7m before extraordinary losses for 1990 from A\$9.95m in 1989.

But Newmont, Australia's biggest pure gold mining company, said adjustments required by Australian accounting standards resulted in a "fair value" reduction of A\$253.5m to the value of the assets of BHP Gold.

Newmont said the adjustment did not reflect its view of the value of BHP Gold, which was still carried at cost.

"This adjustment does not impair the company's cash flow, future earnings or dividend capacity."

"The company's strong gold production projections and the underpinning of revenues from its substantial gold hedging programme which now covers 1.8m ounces, leads to encouraging expectations for earnings in the present year," Newmont said.

Gold production for the year for Newmont, which has interests in eight mines in the Northern Territory and New South Wales, exceeded 365,000 ounces in 1990.

Newmont Australia said it plans to change its name to Newcrest Mining, reflecting the reduced holding of its founding shareholder Newmont Mining.

Mutual and Federal falls to R44m

By Philip Gawth in Johannesburg

MUTUAL and Federal (M&F), South Africa's largest short-term insurer, reported lower profits in the six months to December following a sharp drop in underwriting surplus.

Attributable profits fell to R44.6m (US\$17.2m) from R47m. This was largely due to the decline in underwriting profits to R3.5m from R14.9m.

Mr Ken Sagers, managing director, noted that the industry continued to be adversely affected by aggressive competition, with premium levels inadequate for the risks covered. He said that total claims had

escalated sharply due to many large fires, heavy storms and an unprecedented increase in the frequency of crime-related losses.

Against this background, M&F did well to record an underwriting surplus, an achievement most competitors failed to match. The vast bulk of profits came from investment income, which stayed virtually constant at R55m. Mr Sagers said this was the result of a shift from interest bearing to equity investments as well as static dividend flows and reduced cash flows from underwriting activities.

Net premium income increased by nearly 30 per cent to R453.4m from R349.5m, approximately half of this to December 31, the acquisition of National Employers, a short-term insurer.

The group's solvency margin - the ratio of net assets to net premium income - remains healthy and was about 110 per cent at the end of December.

Mr Warren Clewlow, chief executive, announced that "action is being taken to streamline the mining division in order to enhance its contribution to earnings and to position it according to its strengths and weaknesses."

He also said ways were being examined of reducing the effect of the cyclical nature of the performance on group earnings of Barlades Steel and Alloy, the wholly-owned ferro-alloy and stainless steel subsidiary. Attributable profit dropped to R52m in 1990 from R215m in 1989.

On the platinum side, Rand Mines is desperately trying to make the expensive Crocodile River platinum mine profitable. Last year, it shut its Vansvaan vanadium operation and mothballed the Kennedy's Vale platinum mine. Rationalisation discussions probably relate to disposal of the latter two assets.

The government hopes to raise US\$1.2bn with the sale, which amounts to an indirect form of privatisation. YPF will retain a 50 per cent share in each of the four oilfields, each of which will be run by a different consortium under a 25-year management contract.

The four areas have measured oil reserves of 221.6m barrels and 4.1bn cubic metres of natural gas. Last year, YPF, which controls 60 per cent of the local market, produced 137,500 barrels of oil per day, and 48.6m cubic metres of gas per day.

This is the second leg of a privatisation process that began last year with the US\$242m sale of YPF's marginal oilfields.

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Notices were sent to Warranholders on 13th February 1991. This advertisement therefore appears as a matter of record only.

To the holders of Warrants in

GT CHILE GROWTH FUND LIMITED

SUBSCRIPTION RIGHTS

- On 1st May 1991, Warrants become exercisable to subscribe for the Ordinary Shares of the Company.
- The subscription price is US\$10.00 per Share. At 1st March 1991 the middle market price, according to the Stock Exchange Daily Official List, was US\$11.75.
- Warrant holders must inform the Custodians of their Warrant Certificates as to their intentions and instruct them to send the completed certificates to the Registrar of the Company at the address below by 2nd April 1991 at the latest.
- Subscription monies are due on application and should be paid as follows:
Bank of Bermuda (New York) Limited,
350 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10022, USA.
via CHIPS ABA 994
F/O The Bank of Bermuda Limited,
Hamilton, HM11, Bermuda U.L.D. No. 5584
for further credit to GT Chile Growth Fund
Account No. 0213504
Attention: David T. Smith
- In the event of the loss of a Warrant written application should be made as soon as possible to the Registrar of the Company for a letter of indemnity for completion and return by the Warrant holder.
- Ordinary Shares issued on the exercise of subscription rights will be allotted not later than 15th May 1991, effective from 1st May 1991. Warrants for any balance of subscription rights will be dispatched by 29th May 1991.
- The Company will apply to The Council of the Stock Exchange for new shares to be admitted to the Stock Exchange Daily Official List not later than 15th May 1991.
- New shares will rank pari passu with existing shares in all respects after 1st May 1991.
- Similar subscription rights will arise normally on the first business days in: November 1991, May 1992, October 1992.
- The exercise of warrants will constitute an acquisition of securities for the purposes of capital gains tax. Shareholders who are in doubt as to their taxation position should consult their professional advisers.

6th March 1991

David T. Smith, Secretary, Registered Office: The Bank of Bermuda Limited,
Bank of Bermuda Building, 6 Front Street, Hamilton, HM11, Bermuda.

New Issue

February, 1991

JRC Japan Radio Co., Ltd.

U.S.\$100,000,000

4% PER CENT. NOTES DUE 1995 WITH WARRANTS

ISSUE PRICE 100 PER CENT.

The Nikko Securities Co., (Europe) Ltd.

DKB International Limited

Credit Suisse First Boston Limited

Nomura International

Fuji International Finance Limited

Kankaku (Europe) Limited

Mitsubishi Finance International plc

Bank of Tokyo Capital Markets Group

Barclays de Zoete Wedd Limited

Baring Brothers & Co., Limited

Bayerische Landesbank Girozentrale

Credit Lyonnais Securities

Dai-ichi Europe Limited

Dresdner Bank Aktiengesellschaft

Robert Fleming & Co. Limited

Goldman Sachs International Limited

Hyundai Securities Co., Ltd.

LTCB International Limited

Morgan Stanley International

Paribas Capital Markets Group

J. Henry Schroder Wagg & Co. Limited

Tokyo Securities Co. (Europe) Limited

S. G. Warburg Securities

Wood Gundy Inc.

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ALSTHOM**

for their sponsored

American Depository Receipt (ADR) Programme

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John W. 01-334-5266

Citibank, N.A. Paris

Robert Hughes 1-43-06-10-88

Citibank, N.A. is a member of TSA and BMRB

This announcement appears as a matter of record only

CITIBANK**COMPAGNIE BANCAIRE**

54,000,000,000

5 1/2% Notes due 1993 (the "Notes")

Notice is hereby given to Noteholders that pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of the Notes, the holders of the Notes will have the option to have such Notes redeemed on 20th June, 1991 by Compagnie Bancaire at a redemption price which will be published on or around 12th March, 1991.

To exercise such option, the holders must deposit their Notes (together with unexpired coupons and a completed request for redemption in the form available from any Paying Agent) with any of the Paying Agents, at the address mentioned on the Notes between 6th April, 1991 and 21st April, 1991 (both dates inclusive).

THE BANK OF TOKYO, LTD.
The Fiscal Agent, Tokyo

6th March, 1991

TELEPHONE: 071-828 7233

AFBD MEMBER

FTSE 100

Mar. 24/25 2435 +42

Mar. 29/30 2452 +32

Jun. 24/25 2475 +44

Jun. 29/30 2478 +32

5pm Prices. Change from previous 9pm close

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London SW1H 0NW

Tel: 071-799 2233

Fax: 071-799 1321

NOTICE TO HOLDERS OF

**THE DOW FIRE AND MARINE
INSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED**

Bearer Warrants (the "Warrants")

to subscribe for shares of Common Stock of

The Dow Fire and Marine Insurance Company, Limited

issued in conjunction with an issue of

U.S. \$70,000,000 4 1/2% per cent. Notes 1993

Pursuant to Clause 3 and 4 of the Instrument dated 28th February, 1988 under which the

above Warrants were issued, notice is hereby given as follows:

1. On 28th February, 1991, the Board of Directors of the Company resolved to make a free

distribution of shares of its Common Stock to shareholders of record as of 31st March, 1991

in Japan at the rate of 0.05 new share for each share held.

2. Accordingly, the subscription price of the Warrants will be adjusted effective 1st April,

1991. The subscription price in effect prior to such adjustment is Yen 755.30 per share of

Common Stock, and the adjusted subscription price is Yen 719.30 per share of Common

Stock.

As part of the agreement,

Koor's bondholders in Israel and abroad will have the

choice of receiving 51 per cent of the face value of the bonds

in cash or receive 10 per cent of the face value in cash, 65

per cent in new 12-year 8.5 per cent bonds and 25 per cent in

Koor equity. Koor has issued

\$105m in bonds in Israel and \$105m in bonds in the US.

Representatives of the company's local and foreign bank

creditors are scheduled to meet next week to discuss the

final details of the agreement.

Koor reported a net profit of

\$4m in the third quarter of 1990.

Its first quarterly

profit in more than three

years.

In order to effectuate the Conversion, the holder of any Debenture to be

converted shall surrender such Debenture together with all unexpired

coupons (if any) apportioned thereto at the office of:

National Trust Company

666 Burrard Street, Suite 900

Vancouver, British Columbia

Canada V6C 2Z9

Attn: Glenn Raven

Assistant Manager

Corporate Trust Department

**DONGAH CONSTRUCTION
INDUSTRIAL CO., LTD**

US\$100,000,000

FLOATING RATE NOTES 1997

Notice is hereby given that, in accordance with the provisions of the

above mentioned Floating Rate Notes, the rate of interest for the six

months period from March 5, 1991 to September 5, 1991 (184 days)

has been fixed at 7.35% per annum.

The interest payable on September 5, 1991 will be US\$ 375.57 in

respect of each US\$ 10,000 Note and US\$ 9,391.57 in respect of each

US\$ 250,000 Note.

BANQUE INTERNATIONALE A LUXEMBOURG

Société Anonyme

US\$125,000,000

First Chicago Corporation

Floating Rate Subordinated Capital Notes Due December 1996

Notice is hereby given that the Rate of Interest has been fixed at

7.125% and that the interest payable on the relevant Interest Payment

Date, June 6, 1991 against Coupon No. 16 in respect of US\$100,000

nominal of the Notes will be US\$1,620.83.

March 6, 1991, London

By: Citibank, N.A. (CSSI Dept.), Agent Bank

CITIBANK**Agreement
reached on
Koor debt
rescheduling**By Judy Maltz
in Jerusalem

ISRAEL'S parliamentary finance committee has approved \$100m in loan guarantees to the ailing Koor conglomerate, paving the way for the implementation of complex debt-rescheduling agreements with the company's local and foreign banks and bondholders.

The loan guarantees were approved after months of wrangling between the government, Koor's creditors and its shareholders over the terms of the arrangement. Koor, which is owned by Israel's giant trade union federation, owes local and foreign creditors more than \$1bn.

Mr Benjamin Gaon, Koor's managing director, welcomed the finance committee's decision, saying: "This decision will enable us to put into effect the arrangement with our bondholders in Israel and abroad and with banks in Israel and abroad."

Koor, Israel's largest industrial concern, has been struggling to stave off the threat of liquidation for the past two-and-a-half years. Under a far-reaching recovery programme adopted in 1988, the company has pared its work force by a third to 19,500, sold \$261m in assets, and closed unprofitable factories and product lines.

In return for the government loan guarantees, the Histadrut has agreed to invest \$25m in Koor and cut its stake

to 26 per cent. The figures were boosted by very strong growth in the construction sector, although underlying manufacturing output also grew by 2.5 per cent.

Further evidence of the likely direction of German monetary policy is due this week, with manufacturing

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**Short-covering gives a
strong start to Treasuries**

By Karen Zagor in New York and Simon London in London

SHORT-covering overnight helped US Treasuries start the day on a strong note and the market held firm through the morning in light trading.

At mid-session, the treasury's bellwether 30-year bond was up 1/8 at 98 1/8, yielding 8.24 per cent.

Gains were less pronounced at the short end of the yield curve, where the three-year issue was up 1/4, yielding 7.33 per cent.

The Federal Reserve operated in the open market to arrange \$1.5bn in overnight repurchase agreements when Fed funds, the rate at which banks lend to each other, were changing hands at 6 1/2 per cent.

There was little reaction to the only economic news of the morning, that factory orders had fallen by 1.7 per cent in February, although the decline was greater than the 0.7 per cent decline most analysts had predicted.

In spite of the morning's gains, the market remains concerned that the US economy may be improving quickly enough to prevent the Federal Reserve from easing monetary policy again.

Trading is thus expected to remain dull until Friday, when the February employment figures are due.

GERMAN government bonds showed the first substantial gains for some weeks, despite the release of industrial production figures which suggest that inflationary pressures persist in the economy.

On the London International Financial Futures Exchange, the March bond futures contract closed at 85.44 after opening at 84.99.

The last 9 per cent 10-year bond closed on a yield of 8.38 per cent, against 8.40 on Monday.

Industrial output grew by 3.6 per cent during January, after falling by 0.7 per cent in December.

The figures were boosted by very strong growth in the construction sector, although underlying manufacturing output also grew by 2.5 per cent.

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BENCHMARK GOVERNMENT BONDS

	Coupon	Red Date	Price	Change	Yield	Week Ago	Month Ago
UK GILTS	19.500	08/92	103-05	+0.025	10.77	10.78	11.45
	8.000	03/93	98-15	+0.025	10.15	10.17	10.88
	2.000	10/98	93-00	+0.132	8.94	8.95	8.90
US TREASURY	7.750	02/01	97-23	+0.125	10.08	10.11	10.82
	7.275	02/01	96-26	+0.052	9.25	9.26	9.11
JAPAN	No 119	4.000	05/98	98.4516	+0.142	7.00	6.71
	No 128	6.400	03/00	98.7832	+0.223	6.81	6.57
GERMANY	9.000	01/01	104.2200	+0.370	8.34	8.34	8.61
FRANCE	BTAN	8.000	02/98	98.1105	+0.133	6.22	6.26
	QAT	3.500	01/97	102.8500	+0.260	6.01	5.94
CANADA	9.750	08/01	100.3000	+0.200	6.87	6.89	6.89
NETHERLANDS	8.500	09/01	98.2000	+0.249	8.52	8.59	8.76
AUSTRALIA	13.000	07/00	108.3887	+0.177	11.51	11.49	11.58
BELGIUM	70.000	06/00	104.4500	+0.100	8.25	8.24	8.29

London closing, "Verenigde New York morning session. Prices US, UK in 32nds, others in decimal. Yields: Local market standard. Prices: US, UK in 32nds, others in decimal.

Technical Data/ATLAS Price Source

orders data and money supply figures for January set for release.

Most other European bond markets remained subdued, with many investors waiting for Friday's US non-farm pay roll figures for February before allocating funds.

The labour market data may provide a key indication of the prospects of a further easing of monetary conditions by the Federal Reserve.

Non-farm employment fell by 232,000 in January, prompting the Fed to cut both its discount rate and Federal funds rate by 50 basis points on February 1.

MIN THE absence of hard economic data, UK government bonds continued to find support from expectations of a further cut in interest rates.

Dealers reported some switching to longer-dated gilts on the grounds that the flattening of the yield curve over the past month has gone too far.

This benefited the 11 1/2 per cent gilt maturing 2003/2007, which gained 1/4 point on the day to close at 110 1/2 for a yield of 10.19 per cent. However, shorter-dated gilts gained only around 1/4 at the two-year maturity.

JAPANESE government bonds gave a muted reaction to the Bank of Japan's quarterly Tankan survey of business conditions, with the benchmark government bond issue No 128 closing the Tokyo day to yield 6.645 per cent, against 6.65 per cent on Monday.

The Tankan was interpreted as giving mixed signals on the prospects of a further easing of

monetary conditions by the Bank of Japan. While business confidence fell once again, inflationary pressures in the economy persist, particularly in the labour market.

Mr Yasuaki Mieno, Bank of Japan governor, appeared to underscore that there will be no imminent cut in interest rates in his testimony to the budget committee of parliament.

However, the market was boosted in London trading by signs that the recent rally in the dollar - the foreign exchange markets has come to an end. The 138 was yielding 6.61 per cent by late afternoon.

CANADIAN government bonds offered the highest total return during February, measured in US dollar or sterling terms.

The J.P. Morgan government bond index monitor showed Canadian government bonds giving a total return of 8.86 per cent during the month, measured in US dollar terms.

For sterling investors, Canadian government bonds gave a sizeable total return of 7.28 per cent for February according to data from Kemper Investment Management.

UK government bonds slipped to 14th place in Kemper's index of 17 markets, having posted the best returns for sterling investors during January.

Measured in local currency terms, French government bonds were the top performers, offering a return of 9.36 per cent for the month, against 8.71 per cent on Canadian bonds and just 1.4 per cent on UK government bonds.

FT/ABD INTERNATIONAL BOND SERVICE

Listed are the latest international bonds for which there is an adequate secondary market.

Latest prices at 6:00 pm on March 6

ABSEY NATIONAL 8 1/8%	1981	10/11	101 1/2	8 1/8	101 1/2	0	8 1/8	101 1/2	0	8 1/8
AUSTRIA 12 1/2%	1981	10/11	101 1/2	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2
BANK OF TOKYO 5 3/8%	1980	9/84	98 1/2	5 3/8	98 1/2	0	5 3/8	98 1/2	0	5 3/8
BELGIUM 10 1/4%	1980	10/11	101 1/2	10 1/4	101 1/2	0	10 1/4	101 1/2	0	10 1/4
BICE 7 3/4%	1980	9/77	97 1/2	7 3/4	97 1/2	0	7 3/4	97 1/2	0	7 3/4
BK OF MONTREAL 10 1/8%	1980	10/11	101 1/2	10 1/8	101 1/2	0	10 1/8	101 1/2	0	10 1/8
BK OF N. A. 10 1/8%	1980	10/11	101 1/2	10 1/8	101 1/2	0	10 1/8	101 1/2	0	10 1/8
BRITISH C. 12 1/2%	1980	10/11	101 1/2	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2
BRITISH C. 12 1/2%	1980	10/11	101 1/2	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2
BRITISH C. 12 1/2%	1980	10/11	101 1/2	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2
BRITISH C. 12 1/2%	1980	10/11	101 1/2	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2
BRITISH C. 12 1/2%	1980	10/11	101 1/2	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2
BRITISH C. 12 1/2%	1980	10/11	101 1/2	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2
BRITISH C. 12 1/2%	1980	10/11	101 1/2	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2	101 1/2	0	12 1/2
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Liffe aims for Ecu contract success

By Tracy Corrigan

Life Equ contract

The list of deliverable bonds for June 1991 delivery consists of six issues, totalling close to Ecu10bn, by the UK (9½ per cent due 2001) France (10 per cent due 2001 and 9½ per cent due 2000) Italy (10½ per cent due 1997 and 10½ per cent due 2000) and the European Investment Bank (10 per cent due 2001).

The cheapest issue to deliver is initially likely to be the Ita 2000 issue.

The Liffe contract is twice the nominal size of the Mar contract at Ecu200,000, and the minimum price movement one tick (basis point), so the tick size of Ecu20 is the same

as for the Matif contract.
 ● The Liffe board yesterday decided to put back the opening of the bund futures contract to 7.30am.
 The start of trading was brought forward to 7am, from 8am, last autumn in order to sharpen the exchange's competitive edge against the Deutsche Terminbörse, the German

Germany and Poland in talks on debt burden

on debt burden

GERMANY and Poland agree to speed up talks on a friendship treaty but failed to set

Mr Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, Polish prima minister, said after talks with Mr Helmut Kohl, German chancellor, that discussions would resume next week. Mr Bielecki said he asked for backing in easing Warsaw's massive foreign debt. He sought Mr Kohl's support for a Polish request that Western creditor nations cancel 80 per cent of Warsaw's

LONDON TRADED OPTIONS

Option	CALLS					PUTS					CALLS					PUTS				
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Oct	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Oct	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Oct	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Oct
AMJ (LWS)	500	72	47	67	3	8	11				Abner C6871	240	28	32	34	10	12			
"P523"	500	38	28	36	8	19	24				"C6871"	240	39	17	15	10	12			
"P523"	500	11	22	36	34	45	54				"C6871"	240	39	17	15	10	12			
ASDA	130	14	21	22	4	6	5				Barney C770	300	34	11	11	14	13			
"P318"	130	14	21	22	4	6	5				"C770"	300	34	11	11	14	13			
"P318"	140	7	14	17	4	10	15				Bearcats C9400	390	52	35	40	5	12	22		
Beck, Alway	160	18	25	27	4	8	10				"C9400"	420	22	35	40	15	24			
"P171"	180	6	12	18	4	14	21				Blue Circle C9600	390	52	35	37	14	14			
"P272"	280	4		43							"C9600"	390	52	35	37	14	14			
Bee	650	63	102	122	15	15	20				British Gas C9281	220	21	31	33	2	4	10		
"P171"	650	63	67	88	17	29	32				Drives C9600	180	9	19	24	6	11	14		
Bent's	300	65	70	71	1	3	4				"C9600"	180	9	19	24	6	11	14		
"P523"	300	37	44	53	25	9	12				Glens C10233	1000	37	84	115	19	19			
Bent's	300	65	70	71	1	3	4				"C10233"	1050	13	56	86	47	62	7		
"P523"	300	37	44	53	25	9	12				Howser C5691	550	32	47	65	14	35	14		
B.P.'s	330	38	43	45	25	4	6				"C5691"	550	32	47	65	14	35	14		
"P523"	330	18	28	34	16	15	20				"C5691"	550	32	47	65	14	35	14		
"P523"	360	5	15	27	31						Lowrie C2333	240	5	12	21	20	29	5		
Brough Steel	130	18	21	23	2	4	5				"C2333"	240	5	12	21	20	29	5		
"P523"	160	2		18							McKard C1012	180	13	23	27	2	15	18		
"P523"	100	103	130	160	9	22	27				Reapers C9600	800	30	64	92	30	64	100		
"P523"	100	65	65	65	42	60					"C9600"	850	10	49	69	10	69	10		
"P523"	500	35	65		42	60					R. Roney C9600	160	15	18	25	2	5	6	10	
C & W Ware	550	75	75	75	16	32					"C9600"	160	15	18	25	2	5	6	10	
"P541"	550	23	38		27	37	42				Sears C9941	100	14	9	10	7	8	12		
"P541"	600				25						"C9941"	100	14	9	10	7	8	12		

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UK COMPANY NEWS

McMahon to resign from Midland

By David Lascelles and David Barchard

DRAMATIC developments at the Midland Bank yesterday left the UK's third largest clearing bank with a new chairman and chief executive, and shareholders with a halved dividend.

Sir Kit McMahon, the executive chairman, announced his intention to resign next June, when he will be replaced by Sir Peter Walters, the former chairman of British Petroleum.

In addition, Mr Brian Pearce, the finance director of Barclays, will take over as group chief executive.

The news accompanied the announcement that Midland had decided to halve its dividend to 9p, the first time a clearing bank has taken such a step since World War II. However, the bank managed to report a small profit of £11m in spite of suffering severe losses in the UK.

This was a considerable improvement on analysts' forecasts, which ranged as low as a loss of £100m. In 1989, Midland made a loss of £261m, mainly because of Third World problem lending.

The markets reacted nervously to the news, with Midland's share price rallying from a sharp fall and then later slipping back amid an otherwise buoyant market, to close at 187.5p down on the day.

Sir Kit said the group's results for 1990 were "unsatisfactory" but that action undertaken last year put it in a good position to take advantage of eventual economic recovery.

"Our profits were badly hit by bad debts but we are

pleased with our improvement between the two halves of 1990," he said.

The decision to cut the dividend by 50 per cent was "a difficult one" but if the step was to be taken it had to be a significant reduction.

Midland made a trading profit of £743m, down 15 per cent from the 1989 level, though there was an improving trend in the second half. But this was reduced by a charge for bad and doubtful debts of £703m, more than double the previous year's £307m. Most of this related to the effects of the UK recession.

There was also an exceptional charge of £52m for the costs of restructuring the group, an exercise which the bank said is now producing results in cost savings.

Total assets were down from £62.48bn to £59.64bn, though this still leaves Midland comfortably ahead of Lloyds, its nearest rival among the "Big Four".

During the year, the Group's trend in the second half. But this was reduced by a charge for bad and doubtful debts of £703m, more than double the previous year's £307m. Most of this related to the effects of the UK recession.

Tier 1 capital fell by £264m to £2,347bn, while its total capital was down from £4,861bn in 1989 to £4,300bn. This was largely offset by a 10 per cent reduction in weighted risk assets, leaving the total capital/risk assets ratio at 9.8 per cent (10 per cent) The equity/assets ratio was 4.3 per cent, down from 4.6 per cent a year ago.

Samuel Montagu, the merchant bank in the Midland group, made a pre-tax profit of £55m last year. This was down nearly a third on the previous year's £75m. But Mr Christopher Sheridan, the chief executive, said it had been "a good year in the circumstances".

Although there were no major acquisition deals in the market, the corporate finance department made a good contribution and increased its market share. There was also a good result from the bank's specialised financing department.

Mr Sheridan said the bank had achieved a better balance in its business, and he expected the result to compare well with those of other merchant banks. The profit was equivalent to a return of 31 per cent on capital employed, down from 43 per cent a year earlier.

The group suffered a tax charge of £188m compared with a credit of £57m in 1989. This increase occurred largely because the board decided it was prudent to write off £259m of accumulated deferred tax relief. This brought the after-tax result to a loss of £177m compared with a loss of £204m the year before.

Group costs rose by 4 per cent to £2,395bn, while the cost/income ratio - one of the main targets for improvement over the past three years - rose to 76.3 per cent (72.4 per cent), the highest level ever for Midland or any other large clearing bank.

UK banking made a loss of £37m (compared to a profit of £406m) after incurring a heavy bad debt charge of £510m. Forward Trust, Midland's finance house subsidiary, made £31m, down from £45m. Profits at other associated banking sector companies were down from £35m to £14m.

Profits at Midland Montagu fell to £71m from £79m, in spite of increased trading profits, after a bad debt charge of £88m (£53m). Earnings from Greenwell Montagu Gilt-Edged were strongly up as were contributions from European subsidiaries.

Thomas Cook, the travel services group, achieved record profits of £28m, 26 per cent up on 1989 (£22m), in what seemed to be a good performance in the ground in spite of a depressed market.

Net interest income was £1,643bn (£1,851bn). Other income grew from £1,331bn to £1,491bn. Total group income showed a 1 per cent fall.

The bank's domestic net interest margin narrowed to 3.5 per cent from 4.1 per cent in 1989, while the international net interest margin was unchanged at 1.8 per cent. The margin for the group as a whole was 2.7 per cent (2.9 per cent).

There was a loss per share of 24.7p (28.3p loss). Net asset value per share was down to 309p from 345p a year ago. The second half dividend was 1.7p (10.7p), making a total of 5p for the year (18.0p).

According to Mr Clive Gilchrist, the chairman of the investment committee of the National Association of Pension Funds, dividend policy as well as what actually happens to the dividend itself is important. "Where companies are going wrong is not to tell shareholders what their policy is in determination of the dividend. I'd like them to state what their policy is and stick to it so that we don't have the uncertainty."

Fund managers have been accused of short-termism, added Mr Gilchrist, but "it's easier to take a long-term view when companies tell you what their long-term policies are."

Benlox aims for relisting of shares

By Maggie Urry

BENLOX, the construction, vehicle leasing and property group whose shares have been temporarily suspended at 8p since April last year, yesterday said that it expected to publish accounts for 1989 and 1990 "in the not too distant future".

The company is aiming to have its shares relisted. Benlox, remembered for launching an audacious £2bn takeover bid for Storehouse, the retail group, in 1987 and for once being a joint-owner of four prestigious Westwood gold courses, has been selling businesses to reduce debt.

Bank debts were now below £1m, and should fall further, Benlox said, as land sales are completed.

Mr Bob Hanks-Drielsma, chairman, said that the present management had worked for a year with the aim of starting afresh as a viable concern.

He said that Benlox has about 5,000 small shareholders who have been pressing the Stock Exchange for the company to make a statement and that a relisting was in their interests.

The group said that its losses for 1990 would be "very substantial". Last year it reported a loss of £1.8m, which was "worse than expected". The last reported trading figures showed a £1.8m pre-tax loss for the first half of 1989. Only the construction division had done well in 1990, Benlox said, and had a good year.

Mr Nigel Wright, a non-executive director, has resigned from the board. Mr Paul Bloomfield, a property trader who owns 29 per cent of Benlox shares, is an executive director.

Omni gives ILG £40m

By David Churchill, Leisure Industries Correspondent

International Leisure Group, the tour operator and airline business, confirmed yesterday it had last week received the extra £40m re-financing from Mr Werner Rey's Omni Holdings agreed late last year.

ILG had been concerned over speculation that Mr Rey's own financial re-structuring in recent days would affect its operations.

However, it maintained that the re-financing package agreed last December was not threatened by these changes. It also confirmed that the shareholding in ILG was through Omni and not Harpener, the German industrial conglomerate which Mr Rey controls.

Williams falls to £126m after homes and gardens downturn

By Maggie Urry and Tim Dickson

WILLIAMS HOLDINGS, the conglomerate which has just won its £404m takeover bid for Yale & Valor, the locks and domestic appliances group, reported a 14.2 per cent fall in pre-tax profits for 1990.

The total was £126.1m (£147.0m), just beating the forecast of £125m made with the bid in January. Williams shares rose 2p to 278p.

Turnover for the group - whose better-known products include the iconic Range Rovers and Polycell DIY - was 14.8 per cent lower at £833.6m, partly because of the £206m sale of Crown Berger, the UK paint business, in May 1990.

A fall in interest charges in the second half of the year, thanks to the proceeds from the Crown sale, offset a worsening trading profit trend. The interest charge for the year was £10m, down from £12.9m.

For the year trading profits were 14.9 per cent lower at £136.1m, but this included an 18.9 per cent drop in second half trading profits.

Mr Tim Allen, a director of corporate finance at Williams, said there had been a worsening in trading conditions for the consumer products side during the second half, with the homes and gardens division.

Williams, which includes Smallbone and Amdega, the conservatory builder, making a small loss. As yet, he said, there was no sign that falls in UK interest rates were boosting demand. Rates were boosting the consumer and building products side, which as well as homes and gardens includes do-it-yourself products such as Polycell, suffered a 10.3 per cent fall in trading profits for the year to £53.8m. The industrial and military products division fared better, seeing only a 2.9 per cent drop in trading profits to £70.5m. Businesses sold contributed £21.9m (£27.1m).

After a slightly lower tax rate, the group made a £72m extraordinary gain, largely the profit on the Crown sale. Fully diluted earnings fell 12.7 per cent to 22.7p a share. The final dividend of 7.25p (7p) gives a total of 12p (11.5p) a 4.3 per cent rise. The dividend is only 1.9 times by earnings, down from 2.3 times for the 1989 pay-out.

● COMMENT Shareholders in Williams should realise by now that they are really backing the judgment of chief executive and chairman Messrs McGowan and Rudd. This time a

year ago, after all, they would hardly have expected to see the exit of Crown Berger, or the entry of Yale and Valor. Twelve months from now there is no knowing what further acquisitions will have landed. The key to 1991 results lies both in the speed of the pick-up in the UK and North America and in what can be squeezed out of Yale. The company is not saying much about the latter, but the job should at least be less time-consuming and less complicated than the Pilgrim House/Kiddie turnaround. How much fat remains to be cut out of a company which has been under pressure for a couple of years is another matter. As for the immediate outlook, it appears that the second half slowdown in the loss-making homes and gardens business, US first protection and DIY is at least not getting any worse. But it is anyone's guess how soon interest rates will fall by enough to revive the consumer side, while the weakness of the dollar is still a hurdle in the US. The share has had a pretty good run since the Yale bid but at 278p are on a multiple of some 12 times prospective earnings. That looks high enough.

Expamet declines to £12.8m

By Clare Pearson

A SUBSTANTIAL downturn in trading during the second half meant pre-tax profits of Expamet International, the international building products, security and industrial products company, fell from £13.6m to £12.8m during the 1990 year.

Turnover increased from £150.6m to £159m.

Mr Jeremy Beasley, chairman, said: "These results do not match our expectations, even at the interim stage, when Expamet had reported profits 14 per cent higher at £6.3m. He said that so far in the current year he had seen no improvement in trading from the much lower levels of the final quarter, when the company had been hit by a substantial downturn in

demand in the UK. However, after a much lower £3.08m (£4.02m) tax charge, earnings per share held their own at 20.5p (£21.5p). The final dividend is being maintained at 6.5p making a 10.35p (10p) total.

There was a £493m extraordinary debit - against a £7.14m credit last time - for sale of businesses designated non-core.

● COMMENT Mr Beasley says debt reduction is the big financial objective for 1991, and a good thing too. He is budgeting for borrowings of £21m at the end of the year, to be achieved mainly through selling some small remaining non-core businesses

and reducing working capital. It is not the best climate to do these things, but even if Expamet manages them its shareholders will still face a pretty dismal outlook this year. No-one expects the dividend to be increased. Also, whatever happens on the trading front, the freakishly low tax charge is not going to be repeated so earnings per share are bound to be lower. The shares are not even at particularly depressed levels at the moment and stand on a prospective p/e of 11 assuming the company makes £12m pre-tax for the year. Shareholders might comfort themselves with the reflection that Expamet still reigns supreme in the world of plaster accumulators.

Freeman Group static with £2.3m

By Peter Franklin

AGAINST a background of a severe downturn in the UK construction sector, Freeman Group, the USM-quoted contracting services and insulation distribution specialist, reported only a marginal decline in 1990.

Profits before tax and an exceptional credit fell by 6 per cent from £2.46m to £2.31m. However, the exceptional £197,000, which arose mainly from the sale of premises,

boosted the pre-tax tax figure to £2.51m (£2.45m).

Mr Jim Patten, the managing director, said that a review of contract valuations on the fire protection side of Freeman Contracts had revealed that some of the contracts had been "optimistically valued". In the circumstances the company had felt it prudent to make provisions against a possible £300,000 loss.

Turnover rose from £52.88m

to £76.97m, reflecting acquisition. The interest charge surged to £479,000 (£178,000), as the effects of the French acquisition, Ouest Isol, came through, and gearing now stands at 42 per cent. The interest cover has fallen from 14.8 to 5.8. Earnings per share fully diluted fell to 26.1p (£26.7p) and a final dividend of 5.5p (£5.5p) makes a total for the year of 8.5p (£8.1p).

Hammerson secures New York letting

By Vanessa Houlder, Property Correspondent

HAMMERSON, the property investment group, has let part of a new office development at 37th Avenue, New York, to Cable News Network, a subsidiary of Turner Broadcasting System, writes Vanessa Houlder, Property Correspondent.

The building, which occupies a complete block frontage between 37th and 38th street, is scheduled for completion shortly.

CNN is taking 59,000 sq ft of the 30 storey building which

comprises 590,000 sq ft of office and retail space.

The rent, which was undisclosed, was believed to be about \$30 (£26.50) per square foot.

Hammerson said that the leasing market in New York was as difficult as in London.

It believed that securing CNN as a tenant would pave the way for other prospective tenants.

The high vacancy rates in the New York property market

stem from extensive building programmes during the 1980s, combined with the effects of the recession. New York City tenants, which are principally corporate headquarters, financial markets and business services.

● Great Portland Estates, the property group, has let most of a 60,000 sq ft office development in Holborn, ahead of its completion. The tenants are Bird & Bird, solicitors, who will pay an overall rent of £41 per square foot.

Exceptionals boost Wates City

By Vanessa Houlder, Property Correspondent

WATES CITY of London, the only UK property company to hold all its assets in the City of London, yesterday announced a 17 per cent increase in net asset value from 300.2p to 350.2p for 1990.

Pre-tax profits for the year increased from £10.22m to £30.53m, helped by a £22.09m exceptional item.

The exceptional item stemmed from a £27.02m profit on the disposal of interests in three properties, a provision of £2.25m for cost overruns on two of those properties and a £1.87m write-off for abortive work on its City Plaza scheme over London Wall.

The fall in asset values reflected a 20 per cent fall in investment properties. The development portfolio produced a mixed result, with a fall of more than 20 per cent in the case of Winchester House but a rise from its Vintners Place development, which was the subject of a joint venture with Sumitomo Corporation in December.

Mr James Dundas Hamilton, the chairman said: "I am hopeful of a return to both rental and capital growth in the City during 1992. Wates City is well placed to take advantage of any revival in demand, having pursued a policy of creating what are now called 'trophy buildings'."

Net rents receivable decreased by 2 per cent to

£14.83m, as a result of gaining vacant possession of a Cheapside building prior to redevelopment and the planned run down of income from Winchester House in Old Broad Street.

The interest costs less investment income increased from £2.4m to £3.88m.

At the year end, net debt was £75.5m, with gearing of 25 per cent. Earnings per share increased from 7.19p to 23.19p.

A final dividend of 2.96p was proposed, which together with the interim dividend of 0.77p, gives a total of 3.73p (3.39p), a 10 per cent increase.

● COMMENT

When a company is completely exposed to the worst sector of the UK property market in living memory, reasons to be cheerful are in short supply. Nonetheless, the company puts a brave face on it, emphasising the relative shortage of large modern City buildings and the appetite of Japanese investors for trophy properties, which has been noted in recent months but may well reappear. Unfortunately the good news is swamped by the bad. The City vacancy rate is 16 per cent and rising, rents are down by 15 per cent and falling, large parts of the financial services industry are shedding labour and improvements to transport may make the Docklands an

increasingly credible alternative. Accordingly, it seems possible that the net asset value could drop again this year, perhaps by as much as 10 per cent. Using this admittedly bearish assumption, the share price, down 3p to 162p after a good performance so far this year, is on a prospective discount of 28 per cent.

MAYNE NICKLESS FINANCE PLC
£40,000,000 7%
GUARANTEED SUBORDINATED
CONVERTIBLE BONDS
DUE 1994
(the "Bonds")

Notice is hereby given that on 8th February, 1991, Mayne Nickless Finance plc (the "Company") resolved to change its name to "Mayne Nickless Europe plc". This name change takes effect from 1st March, 1991.

In all other respects, the Company's obligations pursuant to the Bonds continue on the same terms and conditions as previously.

The Bonds are now designated in the Stock Exchange Daily Official List under "Mayne Nickless Europe plc".

No new definitive bonds will be printed nor will any existing definitive bonds require to be stamped to evidence the change of name of the Company.

Dated 1st March 1991
This notice appears as a matter of record only.

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With over 30 different companies active in distribution, personnel and commercial services, our customer base is both wide and diverse.

For example, in Distribution Hays provides a specialised food distribution service for Tesco and Waitrose, a nationwide home delivery service for Marks & Spencer, as well as packaged and bulk chemical distribution for B.P. and ICI, amongst others.

Through Hays Personnel, over 170,000 permanent and temporary vacancies were filled in 1990.

Whilst in Commercial Services, Britdoc provides a countrywide overnight business mail service. Originally designed for the legal profession it has expanded to include over 20,000 subscribers operating in areas such as retailing, banking and the travel industry.

It is the breadth of our three core activities that gives us strength, even in the present financial climate, and ensures that we are well placed to take advantage of better conditions when they come. One area of activity supports another, contributing to our Group's continued steady growth.

Hays Distribution Services Ltd

INTERIM FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS
Half Year to 31 December 1990 (unaudited)

	1989	1990	
PROFIT BEFORE TAX	£27.3M*	£27.5M	+1%
EARNINGS PER ORDINARY SHARE	4.70p*	4.74p	+1%
NET DIVIDEND PER ORDINARY SHARE	1.15p	1.30p	+13%

*PROFIT BEFORE TAX AND EARNINGS PER SHARE ARE CALCULATED ON THE BASIS OF THE CAPITAL STRUCTURE FOLLOWING THE LISTING IN OCTOBER 1989 AND DATED 1 JULY 1989. IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN A COPY OF THE 1990 INTERIM STATEMENT, PLEASE CONTACT DAVID BECKLEY, HAYS PLC, HAYS HOUSE, MILLMEAD, GUILDFORD, SURREY GU1 2SY. TELEPHONE (0432 35222). THIS ADVERTISEMENT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE INSTITUTE OF COMPANY SECRETARIES.

Hays

THE BUSINESS SERVICES GROUP

4/24/91 10:15:50

UK COMPANY NEWS

Polypipe placing to raise £13.6m

By Jane Fuller

POLYPIPE, the Doncaster-based maker of plastic pipes and fittings, is raising £13.6m via a share issue to fund a series of acquisitions.

The funding exercise involves the placing of 9.3m shares at 150p each, compared with yesterday's unchanged closing price of 165p.

Polypipe also announced a 3.7 per cent increase in pre-tax profit to £5.27m (£5.06m) for the six months to December 31, on sales of £33.57m (£33.71m).

In December, the group had £1m cash in the bank after paying £150,000 for the first of the recent acquisitions, Plastic Spools, a maker of such products as cotton reels.

Mr Jack Green, financial and commercial director, said up to £2.2m more was committed to two other companies, both acquired from receivers.

Premier Profiles, a maker of window parts which would be merged with the established Precorl Plastics business, had cost £3.3m.

A further £1.3m was due to go out for Oasis Leisure, a garden furniture company which also had heavy working capital requirements.

In a full year, the three new businesses would bring in turnover of about £20m, he said.

Mr Kevin McDonald, chairman and managing director, said Oasis had particular potential as it lost Polypipe into a new area and brought in bigger moulding machines. Its seasonal imbalance could be tackled by moving into other products.

An imminent fourth acquisition in one of Polypipe's core areas would mop up the remaining, which was about £2m, taking into account working capital and the cost of relocation, he said. At the end of

the process, the group would be free of debt.

The share offer, arranged by Panmure Gordon, enables shareholders to apply for new stock on a 1-for-2.5 basis. Mr McDonald and Mr Geoffrey Harrison, technical director, are not taking up their entitlement to 3.6m shares. The directors' holding will fall from 40 to 36 per cent.

Earnings per share improved during the first half to 5.05p (4.92p) and the interim dividend rises by 9 per cent to 1.2p (1.1p).

COMMENT

Polypipe has taken advantage of a near 50 per cent improvement in its share price since last September to digest a bulge of acquisitions without becoming geared. And who can blame them, especially when the institutions have shown such a strong appetite for qual-

Weak leg leaves Hays static at £27.5m

By David Owen

RESILIENT performances from two out of three divisions enabled Hays, the business services group, to report a marginal uptick to £27.5m in interim pre-tax profits.

The odd unit out was personnel, which registered a 35 per cent operating profit decline. The group said that "speedy action" had been taken in response to diminishing demand and that all overheads had been "substantially reduced."

The weak leg in the tripod was sufficient to drag group operating profits for the six months to December 31 down by 5 per cent to £27.5m.

The marginal improvement at the taxable level from £27.3m came via a sharp reduction to just £200,000 (£1.9m) in the group's net interest costs. That was partly thanks to the predicting of £1.8m of income from interest caps on £130m of debt that the company had the foresight to put in place three years ago.

"It has been bloody difficult," said Mr Ronnie Frost, chairman and chief executive, admitting to being "a bit disappointed" at the marginal nature of the profits advance.

Turnover in the half year was fractionally down at £242m (£243m). Comparative figures have been prepared on a pro-forma basis on the assumption that the capital structure existing following Hays' October 1989 stock market listing had existed since July 1989.

By division, operating profits from distribution were somewhat below expectation at £14.1m (£13.5m). Commercial services, however, manifested strong growth to £6.9m (£5.4m), with the Britdoc document exchange network the largest contributor.

Personnel fell from £10.3m to £6.7m - a figure which masked a decline of less than 20 per cent in the group's key accountancy personnel business.

The group said that it was expecting year-end debt to be below the £24m level recorded at June 30 1990. Shareholders' funds have risen to approximately £104m.

Earnings per share amounted to 4.74p (4.7p). An interim dividend of 1.5p (1.5p) was declared - an increase of 13 per cent.

The shares, which have climbed steeply in recent weeks, closed down 1p at 122p.

Second half fall at Templeton Galbraith

By Philip Coggan, Personal Finance Editor

THE EFFECT of the Gulf crisis on world stock markets, combined with a sharp rise in costs, caused second half pre-tax profits at Templeton Galbraith to fall by 17.3 per cent from £33.6m to £27.8m (£27.8m).

Full year profits for 1990 of the Bahamas-based fund management group, which reports in US dollars, fell only 1.1 per cent to £63.1m (£63.8m).

Total assets under management at the end of 1990 were \$15.9bn, down from \$17.5bn at the close of the previous year. The fall was caused by the downturn in markets which reduced funds by \$2.1bn; this was countered by a net \$500m inflow from the excess of mutual fund sales over

redemptions and in additional fund funds.

Although turnover actually increased to \$175.6m (£156.7m), profits were pegged back by a 42 per cent jump in administrative expenses to \$57.3m (£40.7m).

This increase followed the purchase of Dais Group, a US quantitative research group, and the conversion of Time Assurance into Templeton Life Assurance. Neither contributed to profit in 1990.

A lower tax charge of \$5.04m (£3.38m) helped earnings per share rise to 36.3 cents (34.5 cents). The final dividend is being increased to 10 cents (9 cents) making a total of 15 cents (13 cents).

Mr Tom Hansberger, chief executive, in his outlook for the markets, said that "at no other time in the past 50 years have we been faced with such a period of potentially beneficial change."

"The erosion of communism continues to be a major influence in building worldwide economic growth. Over the long term, the trend towards free markets and greater prosperity will prevail."

what brighter. The company's funds under management and earnings per share have more than doubled since flotation; so the current share price can scarcely be classed as expensive. Fund managers prosper in rising markets and the recent bull run has duly allowed Templeton's shares to jump 30 per cent since January 1. And a rebound in the US dollar, which many expect, should also boost Templeton's shares. However, there will still be those who dislike the restricted availability of the stock and the Bahamas domicile. The final dividend will be others who will want to wait to see how well the company handles its recent diversifications.

Ross moves back into the black with £989,000

ROSS GROUP, the USM-quoted electronics and packaging company best known for its head-phones, moved back into the black with pre-tax profits of £989,000 for the year to December 31 1990. This compares with a pre-tax loss of £485,000 for the nine months to December 1989.

A series of acquisitions - Gilpack, Kirklands, Colswold Electronics and Western Electronics - broadened the company's product base and helped boost turnover from \$5.14m to \$20.07m.

The directors reported a recovery in the consumer electronics business, with controls introduced by the new board contributing to improved profitability.

Earnings per share came out at 4.3p (3p losses). There is a second interim dividend of 0.75p in lieu of a final, making 1.25p for the year (nil).

Whittington, the giftware and greeting card distributor which is being taken over by Ross, reverse takeover by Ross,

Admiral 23% higher in spite of slacker demand

By Alan Cane

MARKED aversion to risks in a sector slippery with banana skins helped Admiral, the Surrey-based computing services company, to its fifth successive increase in earnings per share in spite of slackening demand in its key markets.

Pre-tax profits for the year ended December 31 were up 23 per cent to £3.28m while sales were up 35 per cent to £21.21m.

Earnings per share showed a 20 per cent increase to 19.4p and a recommended final dividend of 2.88p makes a 4.2p (3.5p) total.

The company had cash balances of £2.51m (£2.3m) at year-end and net interest on the cash contributed £495,000, an increase of 63 per cent on 1989, to pre-tax profits.

Admiral's chief markets are the defence and financial services sectors, both of which have experienced significant downturns in recent years.

Mr Clay Brendish, Admiral's chairman, said the company was lean and fit. He added that it had continued to grow strongly in defence and financial services with a view to chosen to work in areas that had proved relatively recession proof.

The recession is sorting out the mess from the costs in computing services with a vengeance. Admiral's strength is its reluctance to take risks and the careful management procedures it has put in place to ensure that it is never knowingly overexposed. Nevertheless, with sales of over £20m it is reaching the point where it can no longer expect to sustain its growth in services pure and simple and a lot will depend on the rate of growth of its newly established products division.

Admiral Software, currently turning over about £1m. Analysts are suggesting pre-tax profits of £3.8m for 1991, and this seems perfectly achievable on the 1990 performance.

Crown Comms set to reduce its debt

By Jane Fuller

CROWN Communications, the USM-quoted broadcasting group which revealed in January that its debts had mounted to £16m, is set to announce a much-needed inflow of funds.

It has reached a settlement with British Sky Broadcasting, the satellite television venture, over the cancellation of news and other current affairs programmes on the British Satellite Broadcasting. BSBS merged with Mr Rupert Murdoch's Sky Television last November.

The amount of compensation involved was described by BSBS as not as high as the £4m which has been rumoured.

However, along with progress on the sale of stakes in commercial radio companies, the inflow of money will clearly ease the problems at Crown, which owns the LBC radio stations in London. An announcement is expected later this week.

After Crown disclosed an annual pre-tax profit of just £700,000 (£5.2m) and passed its final dividend in January, its share price fell to 23p. It has since recovered to 45p.

Jupiter Merlin to reverse into Vantage

By Clare Pearson

JUPITER Tarbutt Merlin, the privately-owned fund management group best known for its green activities, plans to join the main market via a reverse takeover of Vantage Securities, an investment trust which it advises.

Vantage, currently capitalised at £2.6m, is acquiring all the share capital of JTM for £10.7m. The consideration is to be satisfied by the issue of 11.8m Vantage ordinary shares at 92p each, the trust's unaudited fully diluted net asset value at February 23.

Shares in Vantage, which is to assume JTM's name, were yesterday suspended at 86p and its warrants at 36p. The acquisition is subject to approval of its shareholders at an egm on March 23.

JTM, which was formed from the merger of three investment operations in the late 1980s, has about £426m worth of funds under management.

Mr John Duffield, JTM's chairman, said the company planned to expand after gaining its stock market listing, and in particular wanted more pension fund business.

Vantage said the reverse takeover would remove the constraint on growth caused by the discount to net assets at which investment trusts trade on the stock market.

The trust also announced a decline in NAV per share, before allowing for warrant-related dilution, of 32.9 per cent to 83.6p for the year to end December. The dividend for the year is unchanged at 3.5p.

JTM acquired an ecological reputation after it merged with Merlin, a unit trust management company, in June 1989. It now manages two green investment vehicles.

It also has a research department involved in such activities as carrying out "green audits" of portfolios, typically on behalf of local authority pension funds.

Restructured Aegis posts 67% increase

By Alice Rawthorn

AEGLIS, the revamped and reorganised media buying group, yesterday announced a 67 per cent increase in profits before tax and extraordinary items from £40.5m to £67.5m for 1990, despite a slowdown in the European advertising industry.

Mr Peter Scott, chairman and chief executive, said the group had "continued to build market share" across Europe throughout last year. The uncertainty caused by the Gulf war had "softened" the market in the first two months of this year, but Mr Scott was confident it would meet its original growth target by the end of the year.

Aegis was formed last spring after the old WCRS Group reduced its investment in advertising - by selling control of its agencies to Eurocom of France - in order to concentrate on media buying through Carat, the Paris-based buying group.

It also withdrew from public relations last autumn by selling Creamline Dickinson International to Eurocom, but has

since continued the expansion of its media buying interests across Europe and has also extended its sponsorship operations.

In fact, the shape of the group has changed so dramatically that it is difficult to draw meaningful comparisons between its 1989 and 1990 figures. However, turnover increased to £1.72bn (£592.56m) in 1990 and operating profits to £72.7m (£27.7m).

Undiluted earnings per share rose to 37.35p (28.0p) and fully diluted earnings to 25.62p (24.91p). The board proposed an increase in the final dividend to 3.1p (2.5p) making a total of 5.85p (5.2p).

Aegis paid reduced interest of £4.96m (£7.23m) on lower net debt - thanks to improved working capital and asset disposals - of £37m (£72m). However Mr Scott said the rate of debt reduction was likely to be "less dramatic" this year given that Aegis has "significant cash commitments".

The group has future liabilities of £36.3m for the vendors

of Carat, all payable in cash apart from £38m which can be settled in either cash or shares. Mr Scott said the board was confident Aegis would be able to meet these payments through internal cashflow.

Aegis is a complicated company, possibly a little too complicated for the stock market's taste. The combination of its switch in core business, a change of name and a stream of new shares has depressed its share price almost as much as the sob stories of the less successful members of the marketing services sector. This set of results was well in line with expectations and the cash position looks rather better than most analysts had anticipated.

The City sees no reason for Aegis not to meet its forecasts of profits of £70m - and fully diluted earnings of 25.9p - this year. This leaves the shares - up by 5p to 170p yesterday - on a prospective p/e of 6.4 still depressed by the prospect of issuing yet more new shares in payment for Carat.

Halifax Building Society

Floating Rate Loan Notes 1992

For the three month period from 5 March, 1991 to 5 June, 1991 the Notes will bear interest at the rate of 12.95% per cent. per annum.

The Coupon amounts will be £162.89 per £10,000 Note and £325.78 per £20,000 Note, payable on 5 June, 1991

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Prices for electricity generated by the process of the electrolysis of water in England and Wales				
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TENDER NOTICE

UK GOVERNMENT
ECU TREASURY BILLS

For tender on 12 March 1991

1. The Bank of England announces the issue by Her Majesty's Treasury of ECU 1,000 million nominal of UK Government ECU Treasury Bills, for tender on a bid-ask basis on Tuesday, 12 March 1991. An additional ECU 50 million nominal of Bills will be allotted directly to the Bank of England.
2. The ECU 1,000 million of Bills to be issued by tender will be dated 14 March 1991 and will be in the following maturities:
ECU 300 million for maturity on 11 April 1991
ECU 300 million for maturity on 13 June 1991
ECU 400 million for maturity on 12 September 1991
3. All tenders must be made on the printed application forms available on request from the Bank of England. Completed application forms must be lodged, by hand, at the Bank of England, Securities Office, Threadneedle Street, London EC2 1JH, not later than 10.30 a.m., London time, on Tuesday, 12 March 1991. Payment for Bills allotted will be due on Thursday, 14 March 1991.
4. Each tender at each yield for each maturity must be made on a separate application form for a minimum of ECU 500,000 nominal. Tenders above this minimum must be in multiples of ECU 100,000 nominal.
5. Tenders must be made on a yield basis (calculated on the basis of the actual number of days to maturity and a year of 360 days) rounded to two decimal places. Each application form must state the maturity date of the Bills for which application is made, the yield bid and the amount tendered for.
6. Notification will be despatched on the day of the tender to applicants whose tenders have been accepted in whole or in part. For applicants who have requested credit of Bills in global form to their account with Euro-clear or CEDEL, Bills will be credited in the relevant systems against payment. For applicants who have requested definitive Bills, Bills will be available for collection at the Securities Office of the Bank of England after 1.30 p.m. on Thursday, 14 March 1991 provided cleared funds have been credited to the Bank of England's ECU Treasury Bills Account No. 59005516 with Lloyds Bank Plc, International Banking Division, PO Box 19, Hays Lane House, 1 Hays Lane, London SE1 2HA. Definitive Bills will be available in amounts of ECU 10,000, ECU 50,000, ECU 100,000, ECU 500,000, ECU 1,000,000, ECU 5,000,000 and ECU 10,000,000 nominal.
7. Her Majesty's Treasury reserves the right to reject any or part of any tender.
8. The arrangements for the tender are set out in more detail in the Information Memorandum on the UK Government ECU Treasury Bill programme issued by the Bank of England on behalf of Her Majesty's Treasury on 26 March 1989, and in supplements to the Information Memorandum. All tenders will be subject to the provisions of that Information Memorandum (as supplemented).
9. The ECU 50 million of Bills to be allotted directly to the Bank of England will be for maturity on 12 March 1991. These Bills may be made available through sale and repurchase transactions to the market makers listed in the Information Memorandum (as supplemented) in order to facilitate settlement.
10. Copies of the Information Memorandum (and supplements to it) may be obtained at the Bank of England; UK Government ECU Treasury Bills are issued under the Treasury Bills Act 1877, the National Loans Act 1968 and the Treasury Bills Regulations 1968 as amended.

Bank of England
5 March 1991Knight to round off
a remarkable career

Andrew Bolger on a changing role at Inchcape

THERE WAS A touch of the old Hanson about yesterday's announcement from Inchcape, the services and marketing group, that it is to split Sir George Turnbull's roles of chairman and chief executive next year.

Just as Lord Hanson recently said he intended to carry on as chairman of Hanson, the industrial conglomerate, for another six years, Sir George said he would remain as chairman of Inchcape until 1997, when he will be 70.

Sir George said he would not be an executive chairman, as he was determined not to get "under the feet" of the man who will be the group's new chief executive, Mr Charles Mackay, who currently runs the Far East operations, Inchcape Pacific.

On the other hand, Sir George - a dynamic veteran of the British motor industry - said he would certainly not describe himself as a non-executive chairman.

The next six years will round off a remarkable career. Sir George, who was knighted last year, rose to become managing director of British Leyland but quit in 1973 after disagreeing with plans by the board, under Lord Stokes, to centralise the business.

He went off to South Korea to oversee the development of the Hyundai Pony, then from 1974 helped to create a motor industry in Iran for the Shah's regime. In 1979 he returned to rationalise Talbot UK for Peugeot, the French motor group, and joined Inchcape in 1984, becoming chairman and chief executive two years later.

Since joining the group, Sir George has transformed a sprawling rag-bag of trading



Sir George - splitting his executive roles

companies, still stuck in the colonial era, into a tightly managed group with a presence in more than 60 countries. He will oversee the reorganisation of the group, also announced yesterday, into four main business streams, each with a London-based director - motors, marketing and distribution, services and resources.

By staying on until 1997, Sir George will also bring Inchcape to two watersheds which are crucial for the future of the group - the formal hand-over of Hong Kong to China in 1997 and the taking of control by Toyota, the Japanese car manufacturer, of Toyota (GB), its Inchcape-owned British distrib-

utor.

Although Hong Kong and China owe account for only 15 per cent of Inchcape's profits, Sir George remains extremely bullish about the trading prospects of the crown colony, even after the Chinese takeover.

Sir George actively lobbied Mr John Major, the then Foreign Secretary, to grant British passports to as many Hong Kong residents as possible. He did so on the basis that granting British passports as an insurance policy was the best way of persuading Hong Kong residents to stay, and of persuading the Chinese not to do anything which would make Hong Kong residents wish to leave.

Sir George's experience of the Far East also informed his decision to strike a deal with Toyota, whereby the Japanese manufacturer paid \$50m to gain control of its Inchcape-owned British distributor. Toyota took a 5 per cent stake in Toyota (GB) last year, will take another 20 per cent in 1993, and the final 20 per cent at the start of 1995.

Sir George said he knew he would have to reach a deal with the Japanese group when it decided to make Toyota in Derbyshire. He said: "There was no way the Japanese would build a manufacturing plant here, and not have control of the distribution."

His judgement seems to be vindicated by the expensive, and highly publicised, takeover of Nissan, the Japanese motor group, and Nissan (UK), the private company owned by Mr Octav Botnar which distributes its vehicles in Britain.

Although Sir George's level of remuneration will be set by a sub-committee of the board, none expects that the chairman will suffer a pay cut.

In 1989, the latest period for which figures are available, he earned £295,000. By the same token, no-one really expects him to work any less hard. Sir George aims to be at his desk every morning by 7.30am.

The most Sir George will concede is that he hopes to play a little more golf during his globetrotting to monitor the proposed new structure of Inchcape.

Microlec
shares dive
on profits
warning

SHARES OF Microlec, the USM-quoted control and instrumentation group specialising in the oil business, dived 46p to 115p yesterday following a profits warning and news of a dwindling order book.

The directors said the traditional second half increase in sales had failed to materialise, major orders anticipated for the end of March had not been received and the level of activity in the installation business had been well below expectations.

As a consequence, they warned that the results for the year ending March 31 were now expected to be "below current market expectations".

Steps had been taken to reduce the cost base, including some redundancies, the effects of which would be incurred in the current year.

GrandMet sells
pizza chain

Grand Metropolitan, the food, drinks and retailing group, has sold its Perfect Pizza chain of 150 franchised and four managed units to Scott's Hospitality of Toronto, writes Andrew Bolger.

Scott's said the deal, thought to be worth \$25m-26m, brought it the largest take-away and delivery pizza chain in England.

Sale is part of GrandMet's strategy of tightening the focus of its retail operations. Last month it sold two restaurant chains, Pizzaland and Pastificio, for an estimated \$20m.

Scott's has four divisions - food services, hotels, transportation/warehousing and photography. Its UK portfolio includes Commonwealth Hotels International, which owns and operates 11 Holiday Inn hotels.

Borthwicks

Borthwicks has paid £2.4m cash for the freehold of Barnett & Foster's factory and site at Wellingborough. Vendor was Prudential Corporation.

Watmoughs posts
record £11.6m in
resilient market

By Michio Nakamoto

RESILIENCE IN the high quality printing market helped Watmoughs, which produces up-market magazines such as Country Living and Harpers & Queen, post record profits last year for the second year running.

Pre-tax profits in the year to 31 December rose to £11.6m from £10.12m previously.

This follows a 49 per cent increase in pre-tax profits in 1989.

Turnover, which exceeded £100m for the first time, was up 18 per cent to £101.96m (£86.34m).

Profit margins held firm at 13.8 per cent in the second half when economic conditions deteriorated overall.

Mr Patrick Walker, chairman and chief executive, said that the group's high level of business in the high quality printing market had led to last year's buoyant performance despite the difficult trading environment.

Neither magazines at the top end of the market nor companies for which it prints had reduced output or quality to any marked degree, he said.

The company's volume business, which includes printing the annual report and accounts for companies such as British Gas, which requires a print

run of almost three million, had also paid off.

Although competition in the printing industry overall was increasing, Watmoughs benefited from being one of the few printers in the UK with the capacity to do high quality, high volume jobs.

During the year, the group renewed its You magazine colour supplement contract with The Mail on Sunday and added Cosmopolitan, Woman's Journal and The Times Saturday Review to its accounts.

A final dividend of 7.75p per share is recommended to make a total of 10.25p for the year.

This represents an increase of 20 per cent after adjustment is made for the one-for-five capitalisation issue made in April. Earnings per share after adjustment for the scrip issue rose to 35.45p (29.71p).

Watmoughs plans to continue expansion in continental Europe. It took a 57 per cent stake in a Hungarian printing company in February and is currently reviewing two joint venture opportunities in Spain for a deal which could be concluded within a year.

Another targeted area for expansion is with the newly privatised companies, where it has already concluded one contract.

Ashley makes German
acquisitions for £5.7m

By John Thornhill

ASHLEY GROUP, the Spanish food retailer and window blinds group, is extending its activities into Germany through the acquisition of two window blind companies for £5.7m in cash.

The two businesses are Hailer, a Stuttgart-based window blind distributor, and Boden Jalousien, a window blind manufacturer, based near Frankfurt.

The two companies will be combined and run as the Hailer Group under the direction of Mr Dietrich Boden, the managing director of the Boden Jalousien business.

In 1990 these two businesses made pre-tax profits of DM 3m (£1m) on sales of DM 12.1m (£4.1m). Combined net assets at completion were DM 5m (£1.7m).

Mr Tony Butler, chief executive of Ashley, said the acquisitions gave the company access to the very strong German market. Ashley already ran businesses in France and the Netherlands and the integration of these Continental companies would bring significant financial benefits, he said.

Ashley's shares rose 4p to 117p on the announcement.

FIDELITY AMERICAN ASSETS N.V.

Registered Office: Schottegatweg-Oost 130
Curacao, Netherlands AntillesNOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL
ASSEMBLY OF SHAREHOLDERS

Please take notice that the Annual General Assembly of Shareholders of Fidelity American Assets N.V. (the "Corporation") will take place at 2.00 p.m. at Schottegatweg-Oost 130, Curacao, Netherlands Antilles, on March 19, 1991.

The following matters are on the agenda for this Assembly:

1. Report of the Management.
2. Election of the Managing Directors.
The Chairman of the Management proposes the re-election of all present Managing Directors: Edward C. Johnson 3d, Charles T. M. Collis, Charles A. Fraser, H. F. van den Hoven and AMACO Holdings & Trust Company N.V.
3. Ratification of the appointment by the Managing Directors of Charles T. M. Collis as a Managing Director of the Corporation effective April 27, 1990 and acceptance by the Managing Directors of the resignation of Mr. John M. S. Paton as a Managing Director effective that date.
4. Approval of the balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the fiscal year ended November 30, 1990.
5. Ratification of actions taken by the Managing Directors since the last Annual General Assembly of Shareholders, including declaration of an interim dividend in respect of the fiscal year ended November 30, 1990, and authorisation of the Managing Directors to declare additional dividends in respect of fiscal 1990 if necessary to enable the Fund to qualify for "distributor" status under United Kingdom tax law.
6. Ratification of actions taken by the Investment Manager since the last Annual General Assembly of Shareholders.
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the Assembly.

Approval of each item of the Agenda will require the affirmative vote of a majority of the votes cast at the Assembly. A form of proxy may be obtained from the following institutions:

Brown Brothers Harriman
(Luxembourg) S.A.
33, Boulevard Prince Henri
Boite Postale 403
L-1724 LUXEMBOURG
Fidelity Investments (C.I.) Limited
40, The Esplanade
St. Helier, Jersey
CHANNEL ISLANDS
Fidelity International Management Holdings Limited
Oak Hill House
130 Tisbury Road
Hildenborough
Kent TN11 9DZ, ENGLAND

Holders of registered shares may vote by proxy by mailing a form of proxy obtained from the Corporation's principal office in Pembroke, Bermuda, or from the Institutions listed above, to the Corporation at the following address:

Fidelity American Assets N.V.
c/o Amaco Holdings & Trust Company N.V.
Post Office Box 394
Curacao
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

Holders of bearer shares may vote by proxy by mailing a form of proxy and certificate of deposit for their shares obtained and filed in the manner described in the preceding sentence. Alternatively, holders of bearer shares wishing to exercise their rights personally at the Meeting may deposit their shares, or a certificate of deposit therefor, with the Corporation at Schottegatweg-Oost 130, Curacao, Netherlands Antilles, against receipt therefor, which receipt will entitle said bearer shareholder to exercise such rights.

All proxies (and certificates of deposit issued to bearer shareholders) must be received by the Corporation not later than 1.00 p.m. on March 19, 1991, in order to be voted at the Assembly.

By order of the Management
Charles T. M. Collis

Fidelity Investments

LEGAL NOTICE

DIAMOND FURNITURE FACTORY LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, pursuant to Section 402 of the Insolvency Act 1986, that a meeting of the unsecured creditors of the above named company will be held at 33, Newhall Street, Birmingham B3 3DQ on Tuesday 19 March 1991 at 2.30 pm for the purpose of having laid before it a copy of the report prepared by the Administrative Receiver under section 40 of the said Act.

The meeting may, if it thinks fit, establish a committee to exercise the functions conferred on creditors committees by or under the Act.

Creditors whose claims are wholly secured are not entitled to attend or be represented at the meeting. Other creditors are only entitled to vote if:

(a) they have delivered to us at the address shown above, no later than noon on Monday 18 March 1991, written details of the debts they claim to be due to them from the company and the claim has been duly admitted under the provisions of Rule 2.11 of the Insolvency Rules 1986; and

(b) there has been lodged with us any proof which the creditor intends to be presented at the meeting.

Please note that the original proxy signed by or on behalf of the creditor must be lodged at the address mentioned; photocopies (including faxed copies) are not acceptable.

Date: 4 March 1991

John F. Powell and David J. Conway
Joint Administrative Receivers

MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION
&
DEVELOPMENT

The FT proposes to publish this survey on 9th April 1991.

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Second-half
recovery for
Clinton Cards

AS FORECAST at the interim stage Clinton Cards, the greetings card retailer which graduated from the USM to the main market in May 1990, reported another successful year.

The company, which revealed a loss of £173,000 at the halfway stage, turned in a 46 per cent advance - from £3.44m to £5.02m pre-tax - at the January 26 year-end.

Turnover, including VAT, grew to £59.05m (£38.41m) and at the operating level profits were up 44 per cent from £4.02m to £5.77m.

The net interest charge rose to £750,000 (£584,000) and after tax of £1.77m (£1.13m) earnings per share came out at 20.4p (18.66p). The recommended final dividend is 3.75p, making 5.25p (4.23p).

Mr Don Lewin, chairman, said 62 further outlets had been added in the period and the group traded from 225 shops at the year-end. The acquisition in March 1990 of Selectacard in the north of England marked the company's first move to the region.

Wyvale Garden
Centres 29% ahead

Wyvale Garden Centres, improved pre-tax profits by 29 per cent from £1.64m to £2.1m in 1990.

Mr Christopher Powell, the chairman, said the recession and continuing poor economic climate did not diminish the board's confidence in the long-term growth of the garden centre sector of leisure retailing. Five additional garden centres would become fully operational during 1991, he said.

The directors are recommending a final dividend of 2.25p, making 3.375p for the year. Earnings per share emerged at 8.6p (6.3p adjusted). Turnover rose by 12 per cent to £18.25m (£16.27m). The company's shares are traded on the USM.

Walter Lawrence in
purchase and sale

Walter Lawrence, with interests in housing development, contracting and merchandising, is to acquire the 49 per cent interest in West Venture Development it does not already own for around £7.8m in cash.

Consideration will be provided from the proceeds of the sale of Tricom Supplies, WL's merchandising and plumbing

Further growth for
Metal Bulletin

Further growth in the year to end-December was reported by Metal Bulletin, the USM-quoted international business publishing company.

Profits before tax rose from £1.41m to £1.64m and came from increased turnover of £10.8m (£9.97m).

Mr Trevor Tarring, chairman, said that 1990 had seen the installation of a computerised editorial system to which all journalists were being transferred, and work had now commenced on a £500,000 programme to upgrade the editorial offices.

An increased final dividend of 4.5p (3.9p) is proposed, making a total of 6.9p (6.3p) for the year. The dividend comes from earnings per share up from 10.1p to 12.2p.

Interlink Express
declines to £3.1m

Profits before tax of Interlink Express, the USM-quoted overnight parcels delivery service, declined by 13.4 per cent from £3.58m to £3.1m in the six months to December 31 1990.

Turnover increased by 8.6 per cent to £25.5m (£23.48m). The interim dividend is maintained at 1.25p, payable from reduced earnings of 12.17p (14.28p) per share.

Mr Richard Gabriel, the chairman, said the group had achieved an acceptable, albeit reduced, profit margin and had improved its cash position with net borrowings reduced from £2.1m to less than £700,000 at end-December.

The outlook for business in the UK continued to be discouraging, he said. However, he expected the results for the second half to be in line with the comparable period last time.

Pacer Systems
advances 30%

Pacer Systems, the US electronics and aerospace company which is quoted on the USM, lifted pre-tax profits by 30 per cent, from \$1.2m to \$1.56m (£816,000) in 1990.

Earnings per share improved to 18 cents (14 cents) and the directors have declared a final dividend of 3.5 cents (3 cents) for the year.

Mr John Rennie, the chairman, said the recent Gulf war had helped to emphasise two key Pacer business areas -

NEWS DIGEST

war gaming and air data systems. He added that while the company's military markets remained relatively strong it would proceed with its five-year goal to increase commercial sales as a proportion of all sales.

Total revenue amounted to \$27.94m (\$25.06m).

Robert Fraser
reorganisation

As part of the arrangements for the reorganisation of Robert Fraser Group under Stockstyle, a new holding company, Stockstyle has been granted a conditional option to acquire Landhurst, an Ensign Trust offshore which owns 21.35 per cent of Sterling.

Robert Fraser Group already owns 23.36 per cent of Sterling. The takeover panel has confirmed the option does not impose an obligation to make a mandatory offer.

Simon sells US arm
for \$18.04m

In a deal worth \$18.04m (£9.5m), Simon Engineering,

the engineering, environmental and industrial services group, has sold Gear Products of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The purchaser, Blount, of Montgomery, Alabama, is to pay \$14.56m on completion, with the balance of \$3.48m over four years.

In 1989 Gear Products made pre-tax profits of \$1.69m from sales of \$20.96m.

Mr Brian Kemp, Simon's chief executive, said that within the Blount organisation Gear Products would have freedom to develop. Simon would continue to use Gear as a supplier, he added.

Murray Income net
asset value lower

Murray Income Trust had a net asset value of 222.6p at December 31 compared with 272.8p a year earlier.

Net revenue for the half year improved from £4.26m to £4.5m for earnings per share of 5.4p (5.13p). As already announced, interim dividends totalling 6.5p will be paid for the year to June 30 1991 and a final of 3.5p is forecast.

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US agricultural exports expected to plunge \$3bn

By Nancy Dunne in Washington

US FARM exports, driven in the past by low prices and export subsidies, are expected to plunge by \$3bn this year despite the additional boost provided by the devalued dollar.

The US Department of Agriculture is predicting that farm exports will fall to \$37bn, down \$1.5bn from its November forecast. Export volume is expected to plummet to 131m tonnes, from 144.7m tonnes last year.

The brightest spot in the export picture is a spurt in sales of high-value exports, boosted by economic growth in major markets and the lower value of the dollar. A good almond crop in California and a poor one in Spain has provided an unexpected boost in nut sales. In the first quarter of the 1991 fiscal year, sales of fruits, vegetables and nuts to the EC rose by \$88m.

The USDA attributes the bleak overall export outlook to increased production in two of the largest US markets: China, which is reporting record grain output, and the Soviet Union, where production is at near record levels, though there are delivery problems.

The sales picture has depressed prices. With both

lower prices and volume for maize and wheat in 1991, the value of US grain and feed exports is likely to decline by \$2.4bn, the USDA said. Oilseed exports are expected to slide as well - from \$8.2bn to \$5.5bn.

However, USDA analysts are expecting strong sales of cotton. Prices are tied with the 1980 record and world stocks are so low that most importers, particularly China, are turning to the US for supplies.

Dairy sales are also likely to surge, but most will be food aid provided by the US government. Prices are so low that producers have been turning over their nonfat dried milk to the government under the US price support scheme.

US farm imports are expected to increase their slow steady climb, which have gone from \$21bn in 1985-86 to \$22.5bn in 1990-91. The overall US farm trade surplus is due to fall from \$1.7bn last year to \$1.45bn.

Mr Edward Madigan, the administration's appointee as US Agriculture Secretary, assured the Senate Agriculture Committee yesterday in his confirmation hearing that he would be a strong advocate for farmers in global trade talks.

Seeking oil among the mangroves

William Keeling watches a high-tech survey in the Niger Delta

THE MOTOR boat hugged the oxbow curves of the river, its wake cutting through the mangrove forest. The young man at the wheel of the boat, impassive behind a heavy pair of reflective sun-glasses, swung the craft into an adjoining tributary. In the 50-minute journey he has navigated through a maze of waterways, all of which to the casual observer appear identical.

As Humphrey Bogart put it to Katherine Hepburn in the classic film, *The African Queen*, "all the channels we've lost, all the twisting and turning we've done: we may come out back where we started, if we come out at all". If Mr Bogart had borrowed a Nigerian boatman from the oil-exploration group Western Atlas International, he could have saved himself an awful lot of trouble.

In the Niger delta, the swamps are formed by mangrove trees and the river's winding tributaries stretch for thousands of square kilometres. But never once is there a shadow of doubt that the boatman knows his way.

Western Atlas International is a US-based company subcontracted by the Shell Development Petroleum Corporation of Nigeria to conduct three-dimensional seismic surveys of its swamp concessions. The technology of 3-D surveys has been available for the last decade but Western Atlas is

breaking new ground in its use in the difficult terrain of the mangrove swamps.

Oil-exploration used to be a matter of intuition and luck. In the early 1930s a controlled underground explosion would be monitored by a single seismic receiver. It is the anomalies in the signal which indicate the make-up of the earth's structure and by the 1960s the number of receivers per detonation numbered twenty-four.

With the latest 3-D technology, four rows of 20 receivers are used. The system allows experts to analyse the geo-physical sub-structure in intricate detail and to pinpoint potential pockets of oil with increasing accuracy.

A huge advance in electronic technology has made possible the increase in the number of receivers from which the data is collected. The source of the signal is a 2 kg lump of dynamite exploded 51 metres into the ground. The subsequent signal is picked up by the receivers and transmitted via electronic cable or optical fibre to a nearby exploration barge where it is recorded on magnetic tape.

The information on the tape then goes through many months of processing by computer. The end result is a three-dimensional database of the terrain to a depth of 4,500 metres, which allows exploration analysts to study any section they choose from what

over angle they desire.

The practicalities of the 3-D survey in a mangrove swamp belie the neatness of the theory. As the motor boat nudged gently into the muddy bank, a rapid stretch of rotting vegetation wafted over its occupants.

Mr Segun Ogunwumi, the exploration specialist of the team, stepped from the boat and sank up to his knees in slime. One nasty squelch later and Mr Ogunwumi had sunk to his waist. He grasped a mangrove branch and, with considerable effort, hauled himself on to not very dry land.

The swamp terrain, with the smell and consistency of crude excrement, drives home just how valuable the crude oil beneath it is to the human world. A short walk from the motor boat, a two-metre wide path, slashed through the interweaving mangrove, known as a seismic line.

It is along these lines that holes for laying the dynamite are drilled and the receivers are positioned. The purpose of the team was to detonate a charge. Having connected two wires to a detonator box, the men waved red flags above their heads, shouting, "away, away!" A dull boom resounded, the ground quivered like jelly and a 30 ft foot spout of water rose through the air.

Simultaneously, along 24 km of live cables the receivers returned their data to the waiting exploration barge.



The blast team prepares for the shot-firing that will be monitored by 480 seismic receivers

far greater analysis of a field's probable reserves. Although the survey may conclude that a field is smaller than anticipated, Shell officials report that the data usually reveals pockets of oil which might otherwise have gone undiscovered. It also allows wells to be positioned far more accurately.

Following a 3-D seismic survey, at its Nemea field, Shell found millions of barrels of oil in reservoirs that had previously been drawn dry. The men in the mangrove swamps, living for weeks in muddy isolation, had done their job.

Tin producers begin meeting

LEADING TIN producing countries yesterday began a four-day meeting on new measures to reverse the global tin stock build-up and arrest sliding prices, reports Reuters from Kuala Lumpur.

Officials from the seven-member Association of Tin Producing Countries said they would also review efforts to limit exports to underpin sagging tin prices.

ATPC's executive committee met briefly before adjourning for a sub-committee meeting to review tin export and stock statistics, a delegate said. The key issue of export control review is expected to come under discussion today.

The ATPC's members

LEAD WAREHOUSE STOCKS (As at Monday's close)

	Aluminium	Copper	Lead	Nickel	Zinc
Change	+622	+1,075	+300	+86	+550
Close	10,324,625	10,807,850	10,743,000	10,282	10,540,450
Open	9,702,000	9,732,750	10,443,000	10,196	10,000,000

export cutback drive and review the performance of its previous cutback measures.

The ATPC agreed in October to cut export quotas by 6 per cent in 1991 to 98,640 tonnes from 101,967 in 1990 to help trim stocks and buoy prices.

A Malaysian delegate said that the ATPC's export limits were not sufficiently stringent to reverse the continuing build-up in stocks, currently estimated at more than 45,000 tonnes, and to arrest falling prices.

"The closure of many tin mines in Malaysia and other ATPC countries has cut down production drastically," the delegate said. "But the market has not been moving upward."

Australian metals group in cost-cutting exercise

By Kevin Brown in Sydney

MOUNT ISA Mines, the Australian base metals producer, said yesterday it was waging a cost-cutting exercise to cut operating costs at its Mount Isa and Hilton mines in Queensland by A\$100m a year.

MIM said the cost-cutting programme would be aimed at increasing productivity through more flexible working practices. However, several hundred of the mines' 5,000 workers are expected to lose their jobs.

"Everyone recognises that major changes are essential to maintain the international competitiveness of the Mount Isa operation," said Mr Barry Sullivan, general manager of the Mount Isa/Hilton complex.

"The workforce will undoubtedly be reduced, initially by non-replacement of people who retire, but the extent of the reduction will depend on the success of all the measures implemented," Mr Sullivan said.

MIM's joint consultative committee, which includes union and other workers' representatives, said it accepted the "major structural changes" were necessary for

the long term survival of the Mount Isa complex.

The announcement follows a 64 per cent fall in MIM's interim net profit to A\$67.5m for the six months to December. Analysts are forecasting a similar fall in profits for the full year. The company said its earnings were under pressure because of a sharp decline in base metal prices, the relatively high value of the Australian dollar and increasing international competition from the Escondido copper mine in Chile.

MIM is spending about A\$500m at Mount Isa/Hilton over the three years to 1992 to increase the efficiency of concentrating and smelting equipment. The complex produces about 11m tonnes of zinc, copper, lead and silver per year.

MIM recently announced 150 redundancies at its loss-making Collinsville coal mine in Queensland's Bowen Basin coalfield, and plans to suspend operations at the Tom's Gully gold mine near Darwin later this year when current open pit reserves are exhausted.

Queensland coal's cyclone havoc

By John van Os in Sydney

THE AFTERMATH of the unfortunately named cyclone Joy has created havoc for coal production and shipments from Queensland's northern ports. In February these were down to 4.2m tonnes, compared with nearly 5.3m tonnes in the same month last year.

With annual exports of around 6m tonnes Queensland accounts for over 15 per cent of the world's sea-borne trade in coal and under normal circumstances the drop in Queensland exports would have affected prices. However, because of the current glut in both steam coal and coking coal stocks, these have drifted down rather than up and it is feared that the tonnages lost during February will not be made up at a later date.

This could have a severe impact on the profitability of the Queensland producers who recently accepted a US\$1 a tonne price drop from Japanese customers for long term contracts for the 12 months beginning April 1.

The combination of lower prices and reduced output is a savage blow to MIM Holdings, which who ventured into coal in a big way during the early 1980s. It has yet to show a

profit on its massive investment.

The other major loser is the BHP subsidiary, BHP-Utah Coal, Australia's largest producer with annual exports of around 33m tonnes, of mostly coking coal. Its shipments during January and February this year fell from more than 5.9m tonnes to just over 5m tonnes.

While heavy rain early in the year is normal in what is locally referred to as the Big Wet, this year's downturn was a surprise. Since Christmas the region has recorded about 3 metres (120 inches), which has flooded pits and caused the collapse of stockpiles at ports and mines as well as disrupting transport following several railway shippings.

At BHP-Utah's Goonyella mine more rain fell in the first three days of February than the highest in 1989. The company's share of output from the seven Bowen Basin mines controlled

by BHP-Utah Coal was just over 1m tonnes during January, compared with more than 1.6m tonnes in January last year.

This 40 per cent decrease, industry officials say, is typical of most open cast mines in North Queensland, and it is expected that February's drop in production will be just as severe.

The executive director of the Queensland Chamber of Mines, Mr Michael Pincock, said it would not be known until much later in the year if the lost output could be made up. "In the meantime the loss of production is seriously affecting the cash flow of the coal mining companies," he said.

Shipments have been hit hard due to collapsed stockpiles, rough seas and coal being too wet to load. BHP's Hay Point loader near Mackay has been hit the hardest. Most shipments from this terminal in the last couple of months have been from direct transfers from trains rather than stockpiles. This suggests that customers may have accepted coal as conditions at the port would have prevented blending of different types of coal.

MINOR METALS PRICES

Prices from Metal Bulletin (last week's in brackets).

ANTIMONY: European free market, 99.6 per cent, \$ per lb, in warehouse, 1,715-1,770 (1,710-1,770).

BISMUTH: European free market, 99.99 per cent, \$ per lb, in warehouse, 2,800-2,900 (same).

CADMIUM: European free market, 99.5 per cent, \$ per lb, in warehouse, 2,000-2,200 (same).

COBALT: European free market, 99.5 per cent, \$ per lb, in warehouse, 13,500-14,100 (13,500-14,100).

MERCURY: European free market, 99.99 per cent, \$ per 76 lb flask, in warehouse, 125-150 (same).

MOLYBDENUM: European free market, drummed molybdenum oxide, \$ per lb Mo, in warehouse, 2,500-2,600 (same).

SELENIUM: European free market, 99.5 per cent, \$ per lb, in warehouse, 4,800-5,400.

TUNGSTEN OXIDE: European free market, standard 99.95 per cent, \$ per tonne unit (10 kg), 45-51 (same).

VANADIUM: European free market, 98 per cent, \$ a lb V₂O₅, 2,450-2,550 (2,450-2,550).

URANIUM: Naxco exchange value, \$ per lb, U₃O₈, 9.70 (same).

MARKET REPORT

Nickel prices fell sharply yesterday on the LME as warehouse stocks rose to 9,282 tonnes, the highest level since 1987. Dealers said this likelihood of further increases in stocks is expected to lead to support levels being tested in the short-term. Platinum closed below \$400 a troy ounce on the London bullion market after overnight selling in the Far East spilled over into Europe. In New York the April platinum futures contract was also below \$400 at midday. Dealers said the Far Eastern traders had a deadlock on precious metals and seemed to be dictating the action. A close below \$400 on

Nymex would lead to further liquidation. Freight futures on London Fox rose from the opening as both single voyage and time charter rates continued to firm in the physical market, dealers said. The firm trend is expected to continue at least until the weekend, Monday's report that the key US Gulf to Japan grain run had been fixed at \$28.50 confirmed. London cocoa prices closed just below the day's highs as the market continued on its upward path and further gains look possible if key origins remain on the sidelines, dealers said.

COCOA - London POX (5 per cent)

	Close	Previous	High/Low
Mar	655	658	652-660
May	650	653	645-655
Jul	645	648	640-650
Sep	640	643	635-645
Nov	635	638	630-640
Jan	630	633	625-635
Mar	625	628	620-630

Turnover: 45,000 (1990) lots of 10 tonnes

ICE Indicator price (US cents per pound) for Mar 4 655.00 (652.00) 10 day average for Mar 5 655.50 (653.75)

COFFEE - London POX (5 per cent)

	Close	Previous	High/Low
Mar	522	522	522-518
May	520	520	520-515
Jul	518	518	518-513
Sep	516	516	516-511
Nov	514	514	514-509
Jan	512	512	512-507
Mar	510	510	510-505

Turnover: 45,000 (1990) lots of 5 tonnes

ICE Indicator price (US cents per pound) for Mar 4 522.00 (519.00) 10 day average for Mar 5 522.50 (520.75)

CRUDE OIL (Light) 42,000 US galls (Chennai)

	Close	Previous	High/Low
Mar	20.57	20.58	20.57-20.56
May	20.11	20.12	20.11-20.10
Jul	19.74	19.75	19.74-19.73
Sep	19.37	19.38	19.37-19.36
Nov	19.00	19.01	19.00-18.99
Jan	18.63	18.64	18.63-18.62
Mar	18.26	18.27	18.26-18.25

Turnover: 12,295 lots

CRUDE OIL (Light) 42,000 US galls (Chennai)

	Close	Previous	High/Low
Mar	20.57	20.58	20.57-20.56
May	20.11	20.12	20.11-20.10
Jul	19.74	19.75	19.74-19.73
Sep	19.37	19.38	19.37-19.36
Nov	19.00	19.01	19.00-18.99
Jan	18.63	18.64	18.63-18.62
Mar	18.26	18.27	18.26-18.25

Turnover: 12,295 lots

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Jan	18.63	18.64	18.63-18.62
Mar	18.26	18.27	18.26-18.25

Turnover: 12,295 lots

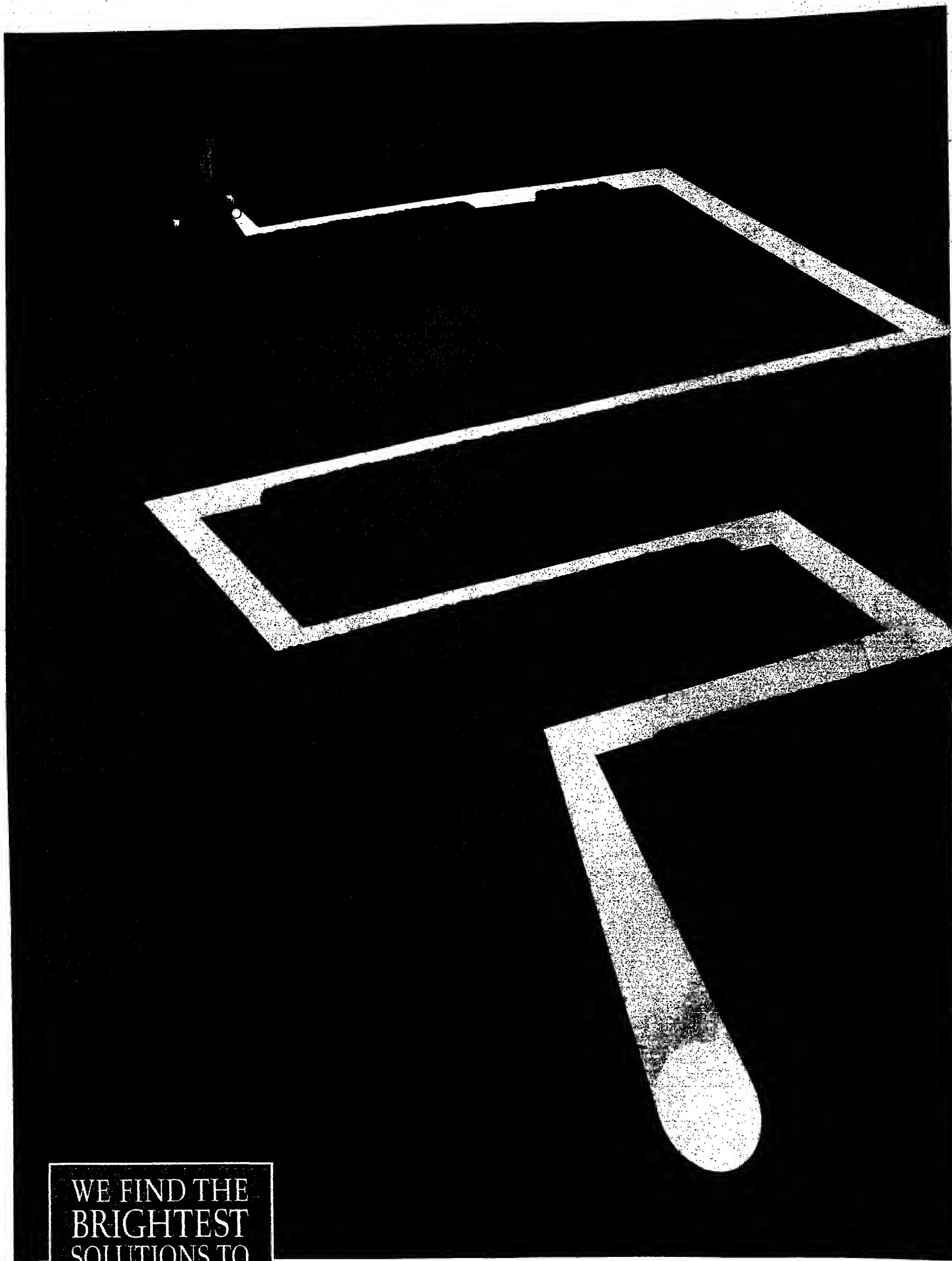
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Mar	18.26	18.27	18.26-18.25

Turnover: 12,295 lots

London Markets

SPOT MARKETS			
Commodities	Close	Previous	High/Low
Crude oil (per barrel FOB)	20.57	20.58	20.57-20.56
Dubai	20.57	20.58	20.57-20.56
Brent Blend (dated)	20.57	20.58	20.57-20.56
Brent Blend (April)	20.57	20.58	20.57-20.56
WTI (per barrel)	20.57	20.58	20.57-20.56
Oil products			
(NYSE prompt delivery per tonne CIF)			
Premium Gasoline	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (UK)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (EU)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Japan)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Korea)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Taiwan)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Thailand)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Singapore)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Hong Kong)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (China)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (India)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Malaysia)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Philippines)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Indonesia)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Vietnam)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Laos)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Cambodia)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Myanmar)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Burma)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Sri Lanka)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Bangladesh)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Pakistan)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Afghanistan)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Iran)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Iraq)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Kuwait)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Oman)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Yemen)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Jordan)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Lebanon)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Syria)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Israel)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Cyprus)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Greece)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Turkey)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
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Gas Oil (Greece)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Italy)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (France)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Germany)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Netherlands)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Belgium)	220.50	220.50	220.50-220.50
Gas Oil (Luxembourg)	220.50	220.50	22



WE FIND THE
BRIGHTEST
SOLUTIONS TO
THE PROBLEMS OF
**PROJECT
FINANCE.**

Project Finance is a maze of complex negotiations and risk allocation so you need an expert to guide you through it.

This is why Alumax Inc. came to us when they decided to construct an aluminium smelter at Deschambault, Quebec, at a cost of \$1 billion.

We're acknowledged innovators in a wide range of sectors as well as in

financing Energy & Natural Resources and Infrastructure projects.

And, trusting our professionalism, Alumax appointed us International Arranger and Joint Lead Bank. Their confidence was well placed. The final syndication was over-subscribed with 23 banks eventually taking part.

Closer to home, we successfully arranged a £244 million loan/lease for

Peterborough Power Ltd - one of the first UK private power projects.

So it's no surprise Euromoney ranked NatWest number 1 arranger and provider of Project Finance in 1990.

If you'd like to know more, Theo van Hensbergen on 071-920 5234 will put you in touch with one of our experts.

You could find it most enlightening.

 **NatWest**

Corporate
Finance

LONDON SHARE SERVICE

BANKS, HP & LEASING

1990/91	Stock	Price	Div	Yield	P/E
1000	Bank of America	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1001	Bank of England	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1002	Bank of Ireland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1003	Bank of Scotland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1004	Bank of Wales	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1005	Bank of Cyprus	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1006	Bank of Greece	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1007	Bank of Spain	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1008	Bank of Portugal	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1009	Bank of France	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1010	Bank of Italy	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1011	Bank of Germany	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1012	Bank of Netherlands	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1013	Bank of Belgium	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1014	Bank of Luxembourg	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1015	Bank of Austria	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1016	Bank of Switzerland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1017	Bank of Sweden	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1018	Bank of Denmark	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1019	Bank of Norway	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1020	Bank of Finland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1021	Bank of Iceland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1022	Bank of Estonia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1023	Bank of Latvia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1024	Bank of Lithuania	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1025	Bank of Poland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1026	Bank of Czech Republic	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1027	Bank of Slovakia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1028	Bank of Hungary	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1029	Bank of Romania	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1030	Bank of Bulgaria	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1031	Bank of Greece	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1032	Bank of Spain	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1033	Bank of Portugal	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1034	Bank of France	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1035	Bank of Italy	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1036	Bank of Germany	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1037	Bank of Netherlands	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1038	Bank of Belgium	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1039	Bank of Luxembourg	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1040	Bank of Austria	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1041	Bank of Switzerland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1042	Bank of Sweden	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1043	Bank of Denmark	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1044	Bank of Norway	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1045	Bank of Finland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1046	Bank of Iceland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1047	Bank of Estonia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1048	Bank of Latvia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1049	Bank of Lithuania	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1050	Bank of Poland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1051	Bank of Czech Republic	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1052	Bank of Slovakia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1053	Bank of Hungary	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1054	Bank of Romania	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1055	Bank of Bulgaria	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1056	Bank of Greece	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1057	Bank of Spain	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1058	Bank of Portugal	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1059	Bank of France	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1060	Bank of Italy	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1061	Bank of Germany	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1062	Bank of Netherlands	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1063	Bank of Belgium	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1064	Bank of Luxembourg	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1065	Bank of Austria	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1066	Bank of Switzerland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1067	Bank of Sweden	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1068	Bank of Denmark	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1069	Bank of Norway	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1070	Bank of Finland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1071	Bank of Iceland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1072	Bank of Estonia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1073	Bank of Latvia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1074	Bank of Lithuania	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1075	Bank of Poland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1076	Bank of Czech Republic	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1077	Bank of Slovakia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1078	Bank of Hungary	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1079	Bank of Romania	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1080	Bank of Bulgaria	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1081	Bank of Greece	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1082	Bank of Spain	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1083	Bank of Portugal	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1084	Bank of France	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1085	Bank of Italy	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1086	Bank of Germany	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1087	Bank of Netherlands	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1088	Bank of Belgium	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1089	Bank of Luxembourg	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1090	Bank of Austria	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1091	Bank of Switzerland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1092	Bank of Sweden	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1093	Bank of Denmark	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1094	Bank of Norway	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1095	Bank of Finland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1096	Bank of Iceland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1097	Bank of Estonia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1098	Bank of Latvia	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1099	Bank of Lithuania	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1100	Bank of Poland	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8

BUILDING, TIMBER, ROADS

1990/91	Stock	Price	Div	Yield	P/E
1101	Building Materials	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1102	Timber	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1103	Roads	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1104	Construction	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1105	Infrastructure	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1106	Transport	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1107	Energy	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1108	Water	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1109	Waste	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1110	Telecom	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1111	Media	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1112	Healthcare	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1113	Education	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1114	Government	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1115	Non-Profit	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1116	Religion	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1117	Arts	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1118	Science	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1119	Technology	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1120	Space	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1121	Defense	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1122	Security	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1123	Law	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1124	Politics	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1125	History	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1126	Geography	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1127	Environment	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1128	Climate	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1129	Weather	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1130	Disaster	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1131	Emergency	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1132	Security	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1133	Law	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1134	Politics	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1135	History	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1136	Geography	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1137	Environment	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1138	Climate	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1139	Weather	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1140	Disaster	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8

CHEMICALS, PLASTICS

1990/91	Stock	Price	Div	Yield	P/E
1141	Chemicals	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1142	Plastics	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1143	Pharmaceuticals	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1144	Agribusiness	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1145	Food Processing	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1146	Textiles	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1147	Apparel	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1148	Footwear	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1149	Leisure	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1150	Media	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1151	Healthcare	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1152	Education	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1153	Government	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1154	Non-Profit	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1155	Religion	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1156	Arts	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1157	Science	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1158	Technology	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1159	Space	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1160	Defense	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1161	Security	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1162	Law	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1163	Politics	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1164	History	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1165	Geography	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1166	Environment	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1167	Climate	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1168	Weather	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1169	Disaster	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8
1170	Emergency	170.00	1.00	0.59	28.8

DRAPERY AND STORES

1171	Alton Papi Sp...	170	-1	13.02	60	14.2
1172	Alexon Mop...	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1173	Amber 12 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1174	Anges 110	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1175	Arctic Circle Sp...	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1176	Argonne 51	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1177	Armstrong 10	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1178	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1179	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1180	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1181	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1182	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1183	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1184	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1185	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1186	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1187	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1188	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1189	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1190	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1191	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1192	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1193	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1194	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1195	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1196	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1197	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1198	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1199	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1200	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1201	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1202	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1203	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1204	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1205	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1206	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1207	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1208	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1209	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1210	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1211	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1212	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1213	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1214	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1215	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1216	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1217	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1218	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1219	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1220	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1221	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1222	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1223	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1224	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1225	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1226	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1227	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1228	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1229	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1230	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1231	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1232	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1233	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1234	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1235	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1236	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1237	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1238	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1239	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1240	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1241	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1242	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1243	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1244	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1245	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1246	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1247	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1248	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1249	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1250	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1251	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1252	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1253	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1254	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1255	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1256	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1257	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1258	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1259	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1260	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1261	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1262	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1263	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1264	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1265	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1266	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1267	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1268	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1269	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1270	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1271	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1272	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1273	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1274	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1275	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1276	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1277	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1278	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1279	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1280	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1281	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1282	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1283	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1284	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1285	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1286	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1287	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1288	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1289	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1290	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1291	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1292	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1293	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1294	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1295	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1296	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1297	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1298	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1299	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1300	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1301	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1302	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1303	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1304	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1305	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1306	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1307	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1308	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1309	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1310	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1311	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1312	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1313	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1314	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1315	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1316	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1317	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1318	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1319	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1320	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1321	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1322	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1323	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1324	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1325	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1326	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1327	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1328	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1329	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1330	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1331	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1332	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1333	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1334	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1335	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1336	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1337	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1338	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1339	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1340	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1341	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1342	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1343	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1344	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1345	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1346	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1347	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1348	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1349	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1350	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1351	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1352	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1353	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1354	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1355	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1356	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1357	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2
1358	Ascent 14 1/2	170	-1	12.6	58	14.2

● Latest Share Prices are available on FT Cityline. To obtain your free Share Code Booklet ring the FT Cityline help desk on 071-825-2128

MTNES—Contd

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March 10c.....	30
XX Inc.....	6
ana Exploration..	9

[illegible]

are \$5. Estimated on latest annual reports and updated on half-yearly figures. For more facts, consult your broker.

[illegible]

not allow for shares which are
a future date. No P/E usual

[illegible]

ITAL & IRISH S

[illegible]

.....	28	Pro
.....	38	Britt Land.....
.....	40	Control Secs.....
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Legal & Gen	32		
Lex Service	17	Tristar Res.	2
Lloyd's Bank	24	Ultramar	29
Lucas Inds.	11		
Martins & Spencer	19		
Midland Plc	14		
Next Week	18		
P & O Ltd	44		
Racal Elect.	16		
		Mines	
		Lonrho	19
		RTZ	48

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Abbey Unit Tst Mgrs (1000)H
80 Haldenurst Rd, Bournemouth 0345 717373
High Income 6142 70 42 70 45 61-126 k 99

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FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE[illegible]

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CANADA

Stock	High	Low	Close	Chng	1700	Stock	High	Low	Close	Chng	1700	Stock	High	Low	Close	Chng			
TORONTO	3:00 pm prices March 5	Quotations in cents unless marked \$	30000 Abbott Pl	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian A	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2		
30000 Air Can	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian B	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian C	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian D	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian E	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A1	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian F	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian G	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A2	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian H	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian I	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A3	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian J	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian K	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A4	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian L	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian M	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A5	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian N	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian O	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A6	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian P	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian Q	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A7	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian R	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian S	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A8	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian T	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian U	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A9	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian V	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian W	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A10	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian X	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian Y	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A11	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian Z	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AA	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A12	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AB	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AC	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A13	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AD	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AE	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A14	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AF	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AG	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A15	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AH	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AI	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A16	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AJ	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AK	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A17	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AL	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AM	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A18	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AN	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AO	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A19	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AP	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AQ	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A20	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AR	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AS	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A21	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AT	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AU	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A22	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AV	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AW	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A23	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AX	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AY	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A24	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian AZ	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BA	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A25	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BB	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BC	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A26	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BD	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BE	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A27	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BF	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BG	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A28	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BF	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BH	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A29	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BG	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BI	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A30	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BH	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BJ	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A31	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BI	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BK	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A32	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BJ	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BL	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A33	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BK	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BM	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A34	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BL	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BN	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A35	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BM	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BO	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A36	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BN	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BP	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A37	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BO	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BQ	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A38	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BP	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BR	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A39	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BQ	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BS	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A40	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BR	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BT	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A41	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BS	93	90	90	+1/2	50000 S&P 500	118.10	117.10	117.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BU	93	90	90	+1/2
30000 Alcan A42	48.10	47.10	47.10	+1/2	27000 Canadian BT	93</													

The FT proposes to publish this survey on
11th March 1991.
It will be of particular interest to the 24% of the
UK Board Directors who are regular FT readers.
This is a greater percentage than any other UK
daily newspaper. If you want to reach this
important audience, call Jessica Perry on 071 873
4611 or fax 071 873 3062.

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4611 or fax 071 873 3062.

FT SURVEYS

NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE COMPOSITE PRICES

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NASDAQ NATIONAL MARKET[illegible]

3:00 pm prices March 5

Stock	Div. 1				Div. 2				Div. 3				Div. 4				Div. 5				Div. 6				Div. 7				Div. 8				Div. 9				Div. 10			
	Div.	100	50	25	10	Div.	100	50	25	10	Div.	100	50	25	10	Div.	100	50	25	10	Div.	100	50	25	10	Div.	100	50	25	10	Div.	100	50	25	10					
Am. Can. Co.	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Oil & Gas	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Sugar	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Tobacco	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Water	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Wire	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Zinc	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Iron	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Steel	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Copper	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Lead	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Tin	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Nickel	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Aluminum	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Magnesium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Potassium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Sodium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Calcium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Barium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Strontium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Bismuth	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Antimony	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Arsenic	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Selenium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Tellurium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Vanadium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Chromium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Manganese	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Cobalt	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Niobium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Tantalum	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Zirconium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Hafnium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Rhenium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Ruthenium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Rhodium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Palladium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Silver	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Gold	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Platinum	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Iridium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Osmium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Selenium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Tellurium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Vanadium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Chromium	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10					
Am. Manganese	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50	25	10	1	100	50</																						

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FINANCIAL TIMES
EUROPE & BUSINESS WEEKLY

AMERICA

Strength in futures and bonds helps Dow advance

Wall Street

A SURGE in the futures market led US equities broadly higher yesterday morning in active trading, writes Karen Zagar in New York.

At 2 pm, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 44.06 at 2,953.17. On the big board, advancing issues led those declining by a ratio of three to one. The Standard & Poor's 500 rose 5.78 to 375.11 by 1 pm and the New York Stock Exchange composite added 1.80 to 204.58. On Monday, the Dow closed up 4.31 at 2,914.11.

A strong bond market also supported share prices. At mid-session, the long bond was quoted 1/8 higher for a yield of 8.25 per cent.

Technology issues paced yesterday morning's rally, with IBM edging 1 1/2% to \$123, Compaq gaining 1 1/2% to \$70.7, Digital Equipment rising 1 1/2% to \$71.7 and Cray Research up 1 1/2% to \$43.

K Mart, a large US retailer, climbed 1 1/2% to \$39.00 in active trading after an analyst of Kidder Peabody repeated a "buy" recommendation on the stock. Mr Daniel Barry, an analyst at Kidder Peabody, expects the company to outperform the US

retail industry, turning in same store sales gains of more than 5 per cent in February. Alaska Air added \$1 to \$29.40 after an analyst at Merrill Lynch upgraded the stock rating and increased earnings estimates to \$1.80 a share from \$1.30.

UAL, parent of United Airlines, climbed 1/4% to \$141. The company has filed with the Securities & Exchange Commission to sell 1.5m common shares to the public. ITT said 1/4% to \$56.40 after it warned analysts that 1991 would be a difficult year. However, the company still hopes to improve operating earnings.

Hewlett-Packard firmed 1 1/2% to \$49 on reports that it plans to introduce three super-fast workstations later this month. First City Bancorp plummeted 1 1/2% to \$5. The company will suspend dividend payments on both its common and preferred stock in an attempt to improve its capital position.

Technology issues also led the secondary market higher. At mid-session, the Nasdaq composite was up 8.07 at 469.19. Apple Computer rose 3/4% to \$22 after the company said it would support an IBM effort which would extend the com-

munication capability of Apple's Macintosh computers. Microsoft jumped 1/4% to \$111.4, a 52-week high.

Health Risk Management plunged 3/4% to \$12 after the company said that 1991 revenues would be lower than expected. For the first half of the year, the company's revenues were \$9.5m.

Canada

TORONTO stocks rose to their highest level this year. At mid-morning, the composite index added 1.25 to 3,532.54 at the year's closing high of 3,532.54 set in February and, by mid-session, stood 23.2 higher at 3,555.73. Advances led declines by 2,543 to 163 on volume of 17.5m shares.

All sectors except gold advanced. Bank shares continued to lead the market. Toronto-Dominion rose 1/4% to C\$18. Royal Bank of Canada gained 1/4% to C\$25. Bank of Nova Scotia added 1/4% to C\$18.50 and Canadian Imperial firmed 1/4% to C\$21.

Maple Leaf Gardens gained 1/4% to C\$22 after jumping 1/2% on Monday. The Gardens, which control the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey franchise, are caught in a legal battle for control of the property.

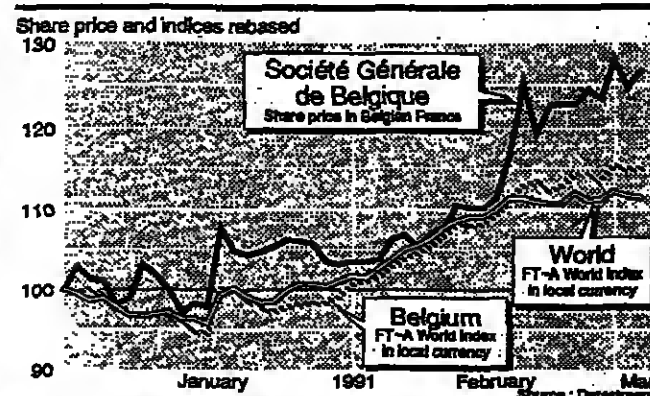
Brussels shows off its home-made finery

Tax-free equity funds and La Générale have attracted investors back, says Andrew Hill

BRUSSELS seems buoyant. In the first nine weeks of 1991, the Belgian cash market index has outperformed both London and New York with a rise of 720 points or nearly 15 per cent. For now, it looks as though the Belgian bulls are back.

True, Brussels has responded to the same influences as other world markets. But although the bourse may owe some of its glimmer to good news from the Clinton administration, the global trend towards lower interest rates (in Belgium they have fallen from 10 per cent to 9 per cent), it also has some home-made finery to show off.

For example, the Belgian Finance Minister, who seemed to favour bonds over equities - has earned plaudits from analysts for a much-needed reform of the financial markets, by promoting Belgian tax-free equity funds. These equity funds, a French invention, allow investors to roll up dividend income, free of tax. Luxembourg has lured Belgian savers for some time



with its Sicaevs, and the De Clercq Funds. Belgian equity funds which no longer offer tax advantages - have suffered proportionately. At the same time, the illiquidity of the Brussels market has deterred international investors. Equity analysts now hope the De Clercq Funds, restricted to investments in Belgian equity and cash, will be able to convert into Sicaevs, while the creation of new Sicaevs should

entice local investors back to the bourse. High-yielding stocks - a favourite of the small investor - and interest rate-sensitive shares already seem to be attracting attention. Générale de Banque and Powerline, the electricity utility, were among the best performers in the first two months of the year, rising by more than 22 per cent.

At the same time, the country's largest holding company, Société Générale de Belgique, has exercised its usual gravitational pull on the market. The sale of Mr Carlo De Benedetti's outstanding investment in the group to the majority shareholder, Compagnie de Suez, and, before that, the replacement of La Générale's managing director, stoked speculation in the holding company's stock (up more than 30 per cent since the beginning of the year) and that of its quoted satellites.

Perhaps, investors reasoned, a new broom would sweep out some of La Générale's minority interests in mature businesses such as CBR, the cement company, or Accor-Union Minière, the non-ferrous metals group. Boosted by such speculation, the cyclical stocks which make up an unusually high proportion of the market capitalisation have also risen sharply in the first weeks of the year. As one London-based analyst puts it: "There have been two themes in Belgium this year - high-yielding stocks and bombed-out cyclical."

In fact, CBR is the unlikely star of the 1991 equity market. Its ordinary shares closed at Bfr7,580 on Tuesday, a rise of nearly 35 per cent since the end of 1990, but that follows a collapse from Bfr9,940 to Bfr7,700 in the final few months of last year. Skeptics and pessimists point out that, in spite of the euphoria, La Générale has not

announced a dramatic restructuring of its assets, and there is no hard evidence of an upturn in cyclical businesses. The approaching corporate results season may puncture the balloon. "Company statements will be very cautious and may verge on the downright negative," warns one analyst. But so far Belgian investors have not had the nerve to jump off the bandwagon.

BRUSSELS started the new account in good form. The cash market index added 13.63 to 5,624.74 yesterday in volume of Bfr558m. Steel-maker Cockerill Sambre was the leading gainer, jumping 5.6 per cent to Bfr170 with 77,000 shares traded.

General, expected to release 1990 results shortly, fell 1.27 to 1,346.70.

STOCKHOLM was led higher by Astra and Ericsson. The Astra-viden General index added 3.6 to 1,067.5 in turnover of SKR390m. Volvo free B shares closed steady at SKR292 before reporting a pre-tax loss of SKR227m in 1990. Ericsson free B shares fell 1/2% to SKR214 and Astra free B added SKR8 to SKR523. OSLO's all-share index rose 5.23 to 488.71 in good turnover of Nkr458m. ISTANBUL fell sharply again, the 75-share index losing 27.43 or 5.8 per cent to 4,464.68.

ASIA PACIFIC

Nikkei falls on central bank economic report

Tokyo

PROFIT-TAKING emerged again yesterday, as hopes of an easier monetary policy receded on the announcement of the central bank's economic report, writes Erika Terazono in Tokyo.

"Late selling led the Nikkei average down 62.54 at 25,913.48, against a high for the day of 26,148.87 just after lunch, and a low of 25,896.74 on the Bank of Japan's "tankan" or quarterly economic survey, which indicated that the supply-demand situation was still tight for goods and services and for the labor market. Ms Miki Koshiro at S.G. Warburg said growth of the Japanese economy still seemed to be on a high plateau.

Volume rose from 360m shares to 560m. Traders attributed the increase to cross-trading, in order to realise profits without portfolio changes before the March book closing. Declines led gains by 491 to 469 with 16 issues unchanged. The Tokyo index of all first section stocks closed 3.18 up at 1,928.98, and in London the ISE/Nikkei 50 index edged ahead 1.14 to 1,489.20.

Traders expected activity to stay sluggish for some time. Ms Caroline Stone at Barclays de Zoete Wedd noted that domestic institutions had become less active before the March book closing, and that foreigners had lost some of their appetite for the Tokyo market.

Interest rate-sensitive, large-capital issues lost ground as hopes of an early cut in the discount rate faded. Nippon Steel shed 1/8 to Y486 and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries declined 1/8 to Y1,780.

Individuals dabbled in speculative shares. Kelsel Electric Railway, the day's most active stock, advanced 1/8 to Y1,770, the sixth consecutive session's rise, on rumours that it would be connecting its railway line to the Narita International Air-

port, and on its business collaboration with Tokyo Disneyland. Y80 to Y1,940 and Howe Machinery, an industrial machine maker, put on Y20 to Y1,170. Howe climbed to a record Y1,230 in the afternoon on rumours that a speculative group based in Kyushu, in southern Japan, was actively buying its shares.

Dowa Mining firmed 1/2% to Y790 as copper and aluminium prices rose on overseas markets. Sumitomo Metals Mining appreciated 1/8 to Y1,280. Blue chip high-technology issues with high export ratios rose on reports of a shorter than expected US recession. Toshiba added 1/4 to Y788 and Sony Y60 to Y6,650.

In Osaka, the OSE average index rose to 26,685.53 on volume of 39.1m shares. Munata Manufacturing advanced in the morning on investment trust buying, but receded later on profit-taking to end unaltered at Y2,720.

Roundup

BLUE CHIPS led the way as a number of Pacific Rim markets responded to New York's overnight stability, rather than Tokyo's earlier tone.

HONG KONG continued its rally in heavy trading. The Hang Seng index broke through 3,600 for the first time since October 16, 1987, with a rise of 36.15 or 1 per cent to 3,636.15. Turnover expanded to 1,000,000,000. Utilities posted the sharpest gains, followed by property. Hong Kong Telecom, the market's biggest issue, moved ahead 15 cents to HK\$7.30.

SINGAPORE'S Straits Times Industrial Index moved up 11.87 to 1,591 high of 1,494.72 as volume climbed from \$8237m to \$9334m. Blue chips led the rally, with shipping, real estate, retail and hotels on many buying lists. Sembawang Shipyard was an exception, down 45 cents at

\$86.25 on lower than expected earnings.

KUALA LUMPUR noted strong support for quality stocks as the composite index gained 9.72 or 1.7 per cent to a seven-month high of 577.55. Renong led the active list with 6.1m shares traded as it rose 6 cents to M\$1.58.

SYDNEY focused on nervous economic issues in nervous trading. The All Ordinaries index lost 12.2 to 1,375.0 and turnover dropped from A\$342m to A\$150m.

Prime Minister Bob Hawke said yesterday that the Australian economy remained weak, and Mr John Button, industry minister, said figures due on March 21 would show the economy contracted again in the final 1990 quarter, the third consecutive quarter of declining gross domestic product.

National Australia Bank, making a one-for-five rights issue of shares to raise more than A\$1bn, retreated 20 cents to A\$5.78.

MANILA firmed in slow trading, the composite index adding 7.29 at 941.05. NEW ZEALAND slipped another 1 per cent, the Barclays index falling 13.49 to 1,323.87 in turnover of NZ\$49.9m, against NZ\$8m. Brierley Investments eased 3 cents to NZ\$1.05 before tomorrow's results.

TAIWAN's weighted index fell 97.33 or 2.1 per cent to 4,527.51 in turnover down from T\$3.6bn to T\$3.9bn. The market showed little reaction to reports that the government would not expand its investigation of stock income tax evasion beyond its inquiries on a few big players. Traders have blamed the crashdown for the recent market decline.

BOMBAY was pleased by the interim budget presented on Monday. The BSE index strengthened 20.49 to 1,345.93. Car shares were subdued on disappointment that the government did not remove the 25 per cent "Gulf surcharge" on petroleum products.

EUROPE

Hopes of lower rates produce active buying

THE HIGH level of institutional liquidity produced active buying in most European markets yesterday. The rise gathered pace in the afternoon, mainly on interest rate hopes and Wall Street's opening strength, writes Our Markets Staff.

MADRID was popular with foreign and local buyers, who focused on big, liquid stocks, as well as speculative shares. The Madrid general index gained 5.14 or 2 per cent to 28,117 in turnover of Ptas21bn, up from Ptas17bn.

Among the day's winners, Banco Popular rose Ptas240 to a 1990/91 high of Ptas10,100. Hopes of contracts in the Gulf and takeover rumours stirred up domestic interest. Tubacex, the steel pipe maker, jumped Ptas60 or 9 per cent to Ptas715, in continued active trading of 1.15m shares, and Altos Hornos Vizcaya, the steel maker, shot up Ptas4 or 14.5 per cent to Ptas267, on 1.2m shares. One analyst said that none of the speculation seemed very soundly based.

Nissan Motor Iberica fell Ptas20 to Ptas75. The market was disappointed by the news that the company would not pay a final dividend for 1990.

PARIS gained another 1.9 per cent as the CAC 40 index level on the CAC 40 index. Domestic institutional buying helped lift the index 33.89 to 1,800.63 in turnover of about Ffr3.1bn, up from Ffr2.7bn.

The market was now overbought and a correction was feared, said one analyst, adding that any interest rate cut had been fully discounted. Demand focused on cyclical stocks. CMB Packaging gained another Ffr6 to Ffr13.50 with 479,750 shares traded, for a two to one rise in volume.

The stock is regarded as sensitive to interest rates because of its level of debt, although much of that debt is at fixed rates.

AMSTERDAM hit a high for the year on buying across the board. The CDS tendency index rose 1.3 points or 1.4 per cent.

SOUTH AFRICA

JOHANNESBURG gained after a slow start yesterday, but volume was light before the budget in two weeks. The all-gold index rose 4 to 1,087 and the industrial index added 14 to 3,214. The all-share index advanced 24 to 2,528.

cent to 91.0 in volume of Ff78m.

Elsewhere, the publisher, fell Ffr2.90 or 3.7 per cent to Ffr74.50 in volume of Ffr145.17m as Goldman Sachs, the US investment house, offered Pearson's 22.2 per cent stake to institutions at a reported price of Ffr14. Dealers said that the terms were tempting to institutions, many of which were immediately selling back the shares into the market.

One fund manager pointed out that many UK institutions already had sufficient Elsevier stock in their portfolios and were reluctant to take a larger holding in a company which had gone ex-growth. Speculation that Elsevier was planning to use the cash raised from the sale of the stake in Wolters Kluwer to fund another acquisition also worried investors.

FRANKFURT'S DAX index ended 9.4 or less than 1 per cent higher at 1,540.26 after a rise of 7.55 to 659.47 in the FAZ at mid-session; but post-bourse

prices in London reflected a higher afternoon trend. Volume rose from DM5.8bn to DM5.8bn as selective investment in blue chips ran in parallel with trading in special situations.

Among the leaders, chemicals saw another good day for Schering, up DM13.50 to DM47.3 for a two-day gain of DM4.50. Special situations included Harpener, up DM24 to DM384 after the sale of a 19.95 per cent stake by Omni of Switzerland to Lombro of the UK; and Continental, the tyre company being pursued by Pirelli of Italy, which dropped DM16 or

6.4 per cent to DM235.50, apparently on profit-taking after steep rises last week.

GÖRICH Industrials continued to rise on the report of improvement in the dollar. The Credit Suisse index closed 5.0 higher at 548.9. Alnussies stood out, the bearers rising SFr40 to SFr41.10 on lower profits and a higher dividend. Its plan to open the registered shares to foreigners left the latter only SFr10 higher at SFr550, but this class had already seen a rise of 20 per cent since late in January.

MILAN saw most of the day's activity in the last 15

FT LAW REPORTS

Underwriters must extend cover

TOUCHE ROSS AND OTHERS v BAKER

Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Neill, Lord Justice Mann and Sir David Croom-Johnson): February 28 1991

A DISCOVERY extension clause in a line slip insurance policy entitling the assured to extension of cover after non-renewal of a policy was held to be a collective condition binding only if all participating syndicates refused to renew, but is binding on the individual members of each non-renewing syndicate irrespective of whether others have decided to renew.

The Court of Appeal so held when dismissing an appeal by Mr Colin Baker, representative defendant for Lloyd's syndicate 126, from Mr Justice Leggatt's declaration that they were bound to indemnify the plaintiffs, Touche Ross and five other accountancy firms, under excess professional indemnity policies.

LORD JUSTICE NEILL said that in the 1970s and early 1980s, substantial lines of professional indemnity insurance were underwritten by syndicate 126.

Syndicate 126 participated in primary policies and in various layers of excess insurance. The relevant policies were all written as declarations under line slips. The line slips were initiated first by the leading underwriter and then by the active underwriter of the syndicate.

The primary policies and the first excess layer policies were for 36 months from June 1 1984. The conditions of the primary policy were set out in clause IV. The first excess layer policy was subject to the same terms and conditions.

Clause IV condition 8 provided for the premium to be paid for each of the three years of the policy. Clause IV condition 30 provided that on each anniversary date of the policy, expiry should be extended for a year unless a year's notice of non-extension had been given by either party.

Clause IV condition 5 provided for discovery extension cover.

Discovery extension cover was cover against claims made after the underwriters' cancellation or refusal to renew or extend, but which arose from acts committed before such cancellation or refusal to

renew or extend. Condition 5 provided that "if the underwriters shall refuse to extend this policy", the assured had the right on payment of an additional premium, to "extension of the cover granted by this policy", for claims made within 36 months after date of termination, in respect of acts committed before date of termination.

In March 1985 notice of non-extension was given under clause IV 30(b) of the primary policy, to expire May 31 1987. Similar non-extension notices were given by the leading syndicate on behalf of all syndicates on the first excess layer policies.

The assured gave notice to exercise their rights under the discovery clauses in the first and third excess layer policies. Syndicate 126 argued that because some syndicates had renewed, discovery extension rights could not be exercised against it. It said the rights had to be exercised against all underwriters, or none.

In October 1985 the accountancy firms issued a writ. They sought a declaration that they were entitled to discovery extension cover on the third and first excess layer policies.

The underwriters counter-claimed declarations that the rights to discovery extension cover could not be exercised against syndicate 126, but only against members of all participating policies.

It was common ground that an underwriting member of Lloyd's undertook a several liability (see section 8, Lloyd's Act 1982).

That principle was underlined by the wording of the excess layer policies - "We, the underwriters... hereby bind ourselves each for his own part and not one for another..."

However, Lloyd's underwriters acted collectively through the syndicate system. The syndicate system operated by vesting control in an underwriting agent who acted on behalf of syndicate members. He might delegate control

to a sub-agent. Either the underwriting agent or the sub-agent would employ the active underwriter, who was given complete authority to bind the members of the syndicate for which he acted.

Each syndicate therefore acted through its active underwriter. Syndicates participating in a particular policy would also act collectively and would vest authority in the leading syndicate. The leading syndicate, for that purpose, not only on behalf of the leading syndicate, but also on behalf of other syndicates who had written lines.

It followed, the underwriters submitted, that though individual underwriters' liability to indemnify was several, for many purposes "the underwriters" in the policies meant the underwriters collectively.

Accordingly, it was argued, the right to give notice of non-extension was to be exercised collectively.

Counsel argued that in the discovery extension clauses, "an extension of the cover granted by the policy" must relate to the type and scope of cover then in existence.

He said extension cover provided by only some of the underwriters was not "an extension of the cover granted by the policy". The cover which was granted by the renewed underwriters was in effect new cover.

Mr Justice Leggatt rejected the arguments. He concluded that "this policy" referred to the particular insurance granted by the line, and that "cover granted by the policy" comprised the indemnity afforded by it, subject to its extensions, exclusions and other conditions.

He said it followed that syndicate 126 was bound to the extent of its line to afford indemnity to the plaintiffs under the discovery extension clause in their respective policies.

The underwriters appealed. It was true that the individual policy was expressed as a policy between the assured and the participating underwriters as a group.

But in fact and in law "the policy" meant and included a bundle of separate contracts. Accordingly, though for certain purposes the underwriters acted collectively, it was necessary to examine in any particular case whether an individual syndicate retained the right to act separately.

It was relevant to remember that, though the insurance

period might be three years, at the annual renewal there might be changes in the participating syndicates and almost always changes in syndicate membership.

In *General Reinsurance v Fennia Patria (1933) QB 256, 364* Lord Justice Kerr said "the slip method of placing insurance contracts results in the conclusion of separate contracts with the subscribers of the slip".

In *The Zephyr (1984) 1 Lloyd's Rep 58, 64* Mr Justice Hobhouse explained that the slip or policy provided a contractual link between the assured and a large number of individual underwriters.

He said "what might seem to be a single contract is in fact a bundle of a large number of distinct contracts on the same terms except as to the amount of each individual insurer's liability".

The fact that the policy incorporated a number of separate contracts meant that the individual syndicates were not only to decide how to deal with a particular claim, but also to decide whether or not they wished to renew or cancel in accordance with the terms of the policy.

In making those decisions the individual syndicate would no doubt confer with other participating syndicates and with the leading underwriter. But there was no reason why their decision to renew cover should affect the assured's right to claim discovery extension cover against other syndicates which might have decided not to renew.

It followed that "extension of the cover granted by the policy" in the discovery extension clauses meant extension of cover granted under the separate contracts.

Thus, in construing the policy, it was necessary to give full effect to the fundamental principle that the policy embraced a number of separate contracts.

That fundamental principle and the rights conferred by those separate contracts, must take priority over provisions designed to facilitate collective action where appropriate.

The appeal was dismissed. Lord Justice Mann and Sir David Croom-Johnson agreed. For the underwriters: *Anthony Basswood QC and Guy Phillips (Sommers & Sommers)*. For Touche Ross: *Jonathan Mance QC and Robert Bright (Lovell White Durrant)*.

Rachel Davies
Barrister

Jointly compiled by The Financial Times Limited, Goldman, Sachs & Co., and County NatWest/Wood Mackenzie in conjunction with the Institute of Actuaries and the Faculty of Actuaries

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MARKETS	MONDAY MARCH 4 1991										FRIDAY MARCH 1 1991										DOLLAR INDEX												
	US	Day's	Pound	Yen	DM	Local	Local	Gross	US	Pound	Yen	DM	Local	Local	Gross	US	Pound	Yen	DM	Local	Local	1990/91	1990/91	Year									
	Dollar	Change	Sterling	Index	Index	Currency	% chg	% Yield	Dollar	Sterling	Index	Index	Currency	% chg	% Yield	Dollar	Sterling	Index	Index	Currency	% chg	% Yield	High	Low	(approx)								
Figures in parentheses show number of times of stock																																	
Australia (79)	123.31	-1.7	101.06	110.76	108.30	110.73	-0.7	8.08	131.54	102.75	111.84	105.12	111.51	108.31	112.74	136.95	123.31	101.06	110.76	108.30	110.73	-0.7	8.08	131.54	102.75	111.84	105.12	111.51	108.31	112.74	136.95		
Austria (15)	210.02	-0.7	106.49	102.46	107.17	107.24	-0.5	1.90	214.99	102.75	111.84	105.12	111.51	108.31	112.74	136.95	210.02	106.49	102.46	107.17	107.24	-0.5	1.90	214.99	102.75	111.84	105.12	111.51	108.31	112.74	136.95		
Belgium (50)	143.91	-0.1	118.39	127.54	118.25	118.05	-0.0	1.90	143.91	118.39	127.54	118.25	118.05	-0.0	1.90	143.91	118.39	127.54	118.25	118.05	-0.0	1.90	143.91	118.39	127.54	118.25	118.05	-0.0	1.90	143.91	118.39	127.54	118.05
Canada (116)	139.48	+1.2	109.00	119.45	111.41	110.69	+1.4	3.43	139.87	109.74	117.13	110.11	110.59	103.81	121.24	141.06	139.48	109.00	119.45	111.41	110.69	+1.4	3.43	139.87	109.74	117.13	110.11	110.59	103.81	121.24	141.06		
Denmark (32)	291.97	-0.4	204.29	225.28	209.77	210.13	-0.2	2.85	289.1	209.77	225.28	210.13	-0.2	2.85	289.1	209.77	225.28	210.13	-0.2	2.85	289.1	-0.2	2.85	289.1	209.77	225.28	210.13	-0.2	2.85	289.1	209.77	225.28	
France (113)	113.20	-0.1	113.20	113.20	113.20	113.20	+0.4	5.17	113.58	106.72	96.57	100.76	96.32	102.29	102.29	102.29	113.20	113.20	113.20	113.20	113.20	+0.4	5.17	113.58	106.72	96.57	100.76	96.32	102.29	102.29	102.29		
Germany (113)	148.35	-1.0	115.94	122.90	118.50	121.71	-1.3	3.39	149.81	114.08	124.81	120.51	120.55	108.85	121.85	148.35	115.94	122.90	118.50	121.71	-1.3	3.39	149.81	114.08	124.81	120.51	120.55	108.85	121.85	148.35			
Germany (88)	148.27	+0.5	92.43	101.21	94.71	94.47	+0.5	2.41	117.87	91.51	100.85	94.02	94.02	100.85	94.02	148.27	92.43	101.21	94.71	94.47	+0.5	2.41	117.87	91.51	100.85	94.02	94.02	100.85	94.02	148.27			
Hong Kong (48)	146.03	-0.1	132.82	145.86	136.75	137.78	-0.1	3.32	170.97	132.84	144.59	136.50	137.88	136.50	137.88	146.03	132.82	145.86	136.75	137.78	-0.1	3.32	170.97	132.84	144.59	136.50	137.88	136.50	137.88	146.03			
Italy (91)	83.49	-0.2	86.25	71.91	83.78	71.58	-0.1	3.53	83.38	68.11	79.87	65.61	71.53	109.28	72.05	83.49	86.25	71.91	83.78	71.58	-0.1	3.53	83.38	68.11	79.87	65.61	71.53	109.28	72.05	83.49			
Japan (453)	138.71	-1.2	108.41	116.81	110.82	116.81	-0.4	0.72	105.33	108.41	116.81	110.82	116.81	-0.4	0.72	105.33	108.41	116.81	110.82	116.81	-0.4	0.72	105.33	108.41	116.81	110.82	116.81	-0.4	0.72	105.33	108.41		
Korea (34)	212.14	+1.2	182.40	195.15	184.72	184.74	+1.3	3.65	220.1	184.72	195.15	184.72	184.74	+1.3	3.65	220.1	182.40	195.15	184.72	184.74	+1.3	3.65	220.1	182.40	195.15	184.72	184.74	+1.3	3.65	220.1			
Malaysia (34)	300.94	-0.5	476.62	522.34	487.16	492.64	+0.5	0.35	606.72	473.93	515.83	482.87	473.93	515.83	482.87	300.94	476.62	522.34	487.16	492.64	+0.5	0.35	606.72	473.93	515.83	482.87	473.93	515.83	482.87	300.94			
Netherlands (41)	142.34	-0.5	111.24	121.91	113.70	112.52	-0.5	4.51	141.82	110.62	120.40	113.17	112.84	108.93	125.70	142.34	111.24	121.91	113.70	112.52	-0.5	4.51	141.82	110.62	120.40	113.17	112.84	108.93	125.70	142.34			
New Zealand (165)	47.51	-2.4	37.31	40.70	35.55	35.55	-1.7	38.04	43.70	35.55	41.40	38.96	35.55	-1.7	38.04	43.70	37.31	40.70	35.55	35.55	-1.7	38.04	43.70	37.31	40.70	35.55	35.55	-1.7	38.04	43.70			
Norway (30)	122.24	-2.4	122.24	122.24	122.24	122.24	+2.6	0.33	122.24	122.24	122.24	122.24	122.24	+2.6	0.33	122.24	122.24	122.24	122.24	122.24	+2.6	0.33	122.24	122.24	122.24	122.24	122.24	+2.6	0.33	122.24			
Sweden (30)	156.19	+1.1	154.89	169.75	156.31	156.37	+1.4	2.28	195.05	154.13	165.65	156.65	156.65	156.65	156.65	156.19	154.89	169.75	156.31	156.37	+1.4	2.28	195.05	154.13	165.65	156.65	156.65	156.65	156.65	156.19			
Switzerland (60)	200.95	+0.5	107.55	172.11	108.32	136.89	+0.3	3.93	199.94	108.18	169.59	157.29	139.41	125.04	158.01	200.95	107.55	172.11	108.32	136.89	+0.3	3.93	199.94	108.18	169.59	157.29	139.41	125.04	158.01	200.95			
Taiwan (61)	103.76	+0.1	127.59	140.27	130.61	118.60	+0.2	4.78	163.57	127.77	138.07	118.40	125.25	128.54	148.01	103.76	127.59	140.27	130.61	118.60	+0.2	4.78	163.57	127.77	138.07	118.40	125.25	128.54	148.01	103.76			
United Kingdom (226)	156.09	-0.5	167.10	156.65	164.82	164.82	-0.6	2.50	164.15	157.18	165.10	157.18	165.10	-0.6	2.50	164.15	167.10	156.65	164.82	164.82	-0.6	2.50	164.15	157.18	165.10	157.18	165.10	-0.6	2.50	164.15			
United States (127)	96.74	+1.0	75.61	82.97	77.29	80.25	+1.5	2.55	95.82	74.85	81.47	75.59	79.19	100.77	92.17	96.74	75.61	82.97	77.29	80.25	+1.5	2.55	95.82	74.85	81.47	75.59	79.19	100.77	92.17	96.74			
West Germany (226)	181.93	-0.1	142.19	155.81	145.52	142.19	-0.1	4.97	152.15	142.28	154.84	145.54	142.28	154.84	145.54	181.93	142.19	155.81	145.52	142.19	-0.1	4.97	152.15	142.28	154.84	145.54	142.28	154.84	145.54	181.93			
USA (526)	149.95	-0.3	116.96	128.19	119.55	149.65	-0.3	3.28	150.93	117.24	127.61	119.54	149.09	128.03	149.95	116.96	128.19	119.55	149.65	-0.3	3.28	150.93	117.24	127.61	119.54	149.09	128.03	149.95	116.96	128.19			
Europe (910)	147.44	+0.5	112.58	128.29	117.79	118.93	+0.8	4.02	147.05	118.48	128.03	117.72	118.37	116.76	128.41	147.44	112.58	128.29	117.79	118.93	+0.8	4.02	147.05	118.48	128.03	117.72	118.37	116.76	128.41	147.44			
Europe (140)	193.73	-0.1	108.05	115.42	110.44	110.03	-0.4	1.06	138.51	109.21	118.67	111.52	110.50	108.75	107.82	193.73	108.05	115.42	110.44	110.03	-0.4	1.06	138.51	109.21	118.67	111.52	110.50	108.75	107.82	193.73			
Pacific Basin (850)	142.37	-0.5	111.27	121.93	113.72	119.00	-0.1	2.31	143.13	111.59	121.65	114.37	119.12	114.18	116.08	142.37	111.27	121.93	113.72	119.00	-0.1	2.31	143.13	111.59	121.65	114.37	119.12	114.18	116.08	142.37			
Pacific Basin (1950)	148.94	-0.2	116.40	122.58	118.99	147.45	-0.2	3.29	149.25	118.99	125.91	119.29	147.75	149.25	116.40	122.58	118.99	147.45	147.45	-0.2	3.29	149.25	118.99	125.91	119.29	147.75	149.25	116.40	122.58	118.99			
North America (542)	128.41	+0.5	103.19	113.11	106.48	117.55	-0.1	4.16	132.69	103.80	113.00	106.20	117.07	106.85	127.48	128.41	103.19	113.11	106.48	117.55	-0.1	4.16	132.69	103.80	113.00	106.20	117.07	106.85	127.48	128.41			
Europe Ex Japan (197)	143.12	-0.5	111.65	122.59	114.33	118.62	+0.0	2.37	143.26	112.31	122.26	114.30	119.67	143.12	111.65	122.59	114.33	118.62	118.62	+0.0	2.37	143.26	112.31	122.26	114.30	119.67	143.12	111.65	122.59	114.33	118.62		
Europe Ex Japan (1176)	140.54	-0.4	109.84	120.39	112.28	127.63	-0.1	2.40	144.16	110.27	120.02	112.81	127.81	162.01	115.37	140.54	109.84	120.39	112.28	127.63	-0.1	2.40	144.16	110.27	120.02	112.81	127.81	162.01	115.37	140.54			
World Ex. Jap. (1176)	143.87	-0.4	112.44	123.24	114.34	128.99	-0.1	2.68	144.47	112.86	122.84	115.45	129.17	161.84	118.04	143.87	112.44	123.24	114.34	128.99	-0.1	2.68	144.47	112.86	122.84	115.45	129.17	161.84	118.04	143.87			
World Ex. Jap. (2244)	148.50	+0.0	118.08	127.21	116.65	134.45	+0.0	3.54	145.95	116.04	128.31	116.73	134.44	161.59	128.31	148.50	118.08	127.21	116.65	134.45	+0.0	3.54	145.95	116.04	128.31	116.73	134.44	161.59	128.31	148.50			
World Ex. Japan (1850)	144.22	-0.4	112.71	128.53	115.21	129.07	-0.1	2.88	144.80	113.11	121.10	115.72	129.24	162.05	113.46	144.22	112.71	128.53	115.21	129.07	-0.1	2.88	144.80	113.11	121.10	115.72	129.24	162.05	113.46	144.22			